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# KILLBOY

103  
DECEMBER  
2006

ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE

*Best of 2006*



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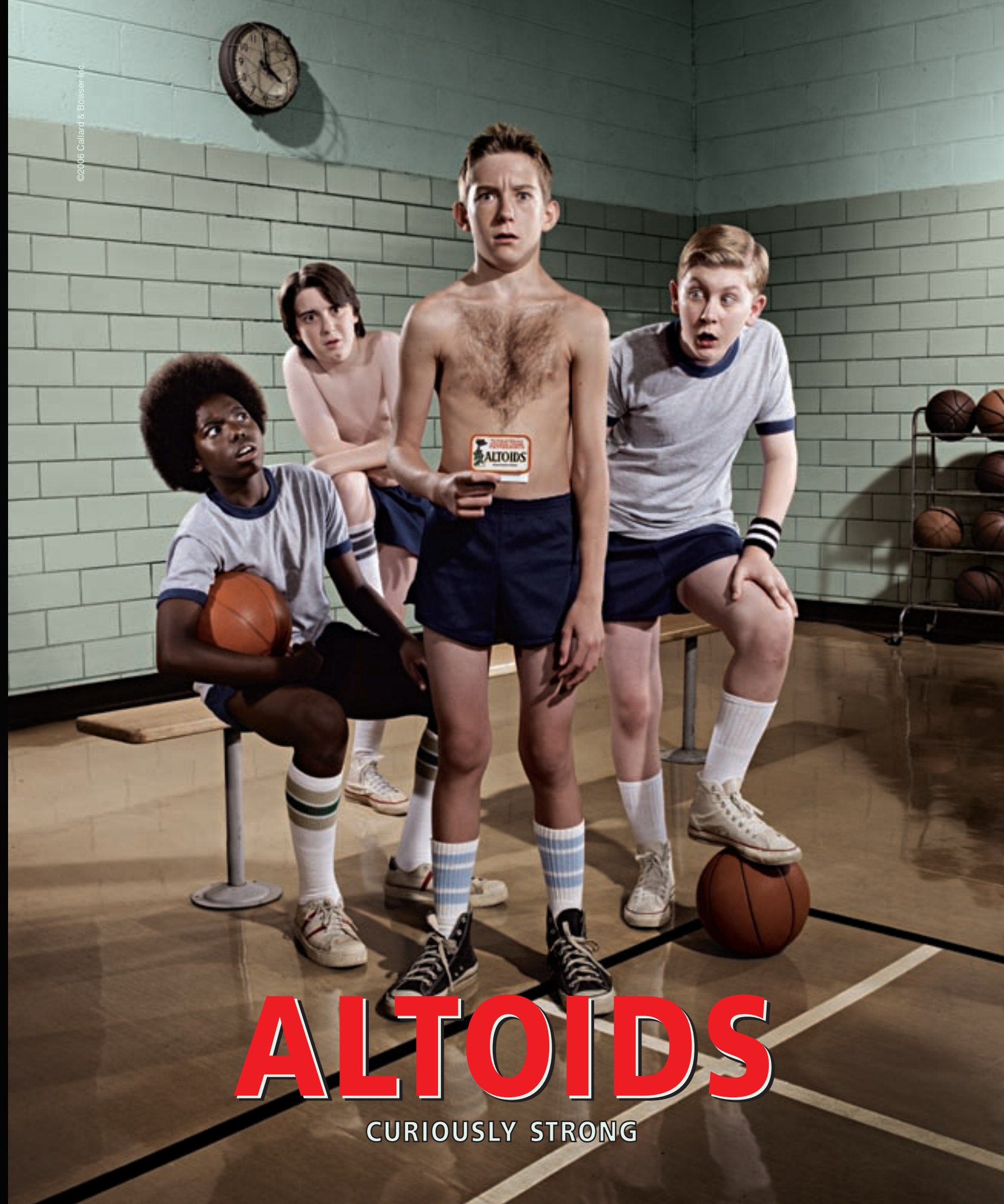


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Label art from Mr. Flash's "Disco Dynamite" on Ed Banger Records, one of XLR8R's top labels of 2006. (Artwork by So Me)



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**ALTOIDS**  
CURIOSLY STRONG

## ED'S RANT SINGLES GOING STEADY



Soulwax (shown here at Brooklyn's Studio B) put on one of the best live shows this year.

"Is the album dead?" seemed to be the reigning question this year, as widespread digital downloading, MP3 player-ing, and laptop DJing turned listening to music into a 12-inch-singular experience. It often seemed like more credit was due to the producers than the artists themselves, and why not? With Timbaland, Paul Epworth, Traxamillion, or Just Blaze behind the boards, even your grandma could make a hit album. (No offense to your grandma or anything.)

If 2006 was the year of the single, that would explain why DJs became important again. The original preachers of the cross-genre doctrine—bass don Diplo, electro-rock phenoms Soulwax—adapted their talents to new roles (as a forward-thinking label owner and a banging live act, respectively) and passed the torch to young guns from London to Los Angeles: Tag-team DJ duos from Chicago's Flosstradamus to Ottawa's Jokers of the Scene threw down everything from snap to electro-house in their sets. Programs like Serato made it all possible, to the dismay of serious record collectors and sonic purists (128 bits on a bad bar soundsystem? *Tsk tsk*).

As people paid attention to singles, the record label's curatorial role became even more important. Stones Throw and Rhymesayers continued to be go-to names for hip-hop (while mainstream rap fans had to depend on mixtapes to get their Lil' Wayne fix), and Warp, Sub Pop, and XL Recordings were more surprising and dependable than ever. Dance labels paid more attention to representing their sound visually, with veterans like James Holden (Border Community) and Daft Punk manager Pedro Winter (Ed Banger) making a

strong case for collecting records again.

Speaking of Daft Punk... Their return at Coachella was insane. In robot masks, inside a giant, pulsating, neon pyramid in a tent packed rib-to-rib, the Illuminati of filtered house proved that dancing's not dead, cleverly paving the way for the inevitable rave revival.

Live music seemed to get better and freer in 2006. Punk wept at the continued onslaught of cookie-cutter "emo" bands with their manufactured angst and *x-treme* hair, but indie artists figured out how to translate studio trickery into on-stage excitement. Liars, Les Georges Leningrad, Japanther, and Clipd Beaks surged forward, and Lady Sovereign finally got her shit together to rock Coachella and gain a number one spot on MTV's *TRL*. (Whaaaaat!?) Jamie Lidell, Daedelus, Girl Talk, and Booka Shade were among the many who did away with the laptop jokes and made electronic music fun to see live.

While many spent hours of "work" time tailoring iTunes playlists and MySpace profiles, others rebelled against the world of 0s and 1s using lo-fi recording techniques (tape loops, VCRs, four-tracks) and buying aged vinyl. As dubstep fiends experimented with bass ballistics and bands like TV on the Radio and Mastodon reinvented rock's dynamics, many indulged in considerably more quiet, folky sounds from the likes of Joanna Newsom, Bonnie "Prince" Billy, and M Ward.

Whether you were turned on or off in 2006, you probably noticed the near absence of political commentary in music. But maybe making music itself is the revolutionary act? I guess we'll have to answer that question next year.

—Vivian Host, Editor

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### ON THE COVER

XLR8R's Best Artist of 2006, Justice, illustrated by So Me

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# CHICKEN?

CURIOSLY STRONG

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### SPARKY HARDISTY & KIMBERLEE WHALEY

Sometime in the late '90s, Sparky Hardisty and Kimberlee Whaley decided that their marriage would be stronger if they shared a case of carpal tunnel syndrome, and promptly moved half way across the continent to Minneapolis to study design and photography respectively. Six years later, they continue the dream through their spare-bedroom design operation, Midwest Visual Agency. In addition to making images for a range of cultural and corporate clients, Sparky and Kim rep heavy in the forthcoming *Handjob*, a collection of hand-made typography.

[www.m-v-a.com](http://www.m-v-a.com)



### BRYANT RUTLEDGE

He loses his phone every other day and once bought a bag of broccoli thinking it was weed, but we keep Bryant around for his online production skills and his uncanny ability to encounter hip-hop stars at random. When he isn't booking [xlr8r.com](http://xlr8r.com)'s MP3 downloads, creating the weekly podcast, and badgering labels for their music videos, Bryant can be found spinning some serious beats in dive bars around San Francisco and listlessly waiting for the notoriously late 24 Divis bus to take him to his next adventure.



### ANDY HERMANN

John Tejada was on the lineup at the first rave that writer Andy Hermann ever attended, so it's pretty cool that he got to interview him for his first *XLR8R* article. A music journalist, critic, and occasional DJ, Andy's stuff has also appeared in *BPM*, *PopMatters*, *Lotus*, the *Boston Phoenix*, and on [ARTISTdirect.com](http://ARTISTdirect.com), where he's the managing editor.

[www.bloggersbanquet.com](http://www.bloggersbanquet.com)

Andy's photo by Adam Latham



### SO ME

Cover illustrator So Me was born 27 years ago in Paris, and continues to live and work there today. He's currently the art director of the amazing French label Ed Banger, where he designs artwork for the likes of Justice, Sebastian, and Uffie. He recently directed his first video, for DJ Mehdi's "I Am Somebody," and regularly does graphic design work for Nike, Colette, *Dazed and Confused*, and Japanese brand Revolver.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to [letters@xlr8r.com](mailto:letters@xlr8r.com) or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.



October Issue #101



November Issue #102

### Berlin Liebe

Hey Vivian, Hey XLR8R, Just picked up some copies [of the Berlin issue, #101] and it's much fun to have a look at my own city from your point of view. So you must have done a really good job. Thank you! Great issue.

Best,  
Achim (a.k.a. Prosumer), via email

Respect for your very charming Berlin issue—it made me really laugh! This hopefully helps to finally open up a second Neuton office in Berlin. And there's even Sido and KIZ featured! Can't

believe it. Well done—keep up the good work.  
Daniel Rérat from Neuton, via email

Nice one!  
Cheers,  
Alex Gallus (SuchASound/Reggae im Moskau), via email

Thanks. It is a really nice issue.  
Sunny greetings from Berlin,  
x Miss Yeti via email

Picked some mags up yesterday, nice one. Cool issue, hehehe.  
Peace yo,  
Nat (Proptronix), via email

Thanks a lot for the issue. We were very happy about the KIZ article. Yeaaaaahhhh.  
Rock 'n' roll.  
Marcus Staiger from Royal Bunker, via email

What a nice job. That looks great. Congratulations! The issue is great, despite featuring some of the usual suspects. You captured it in a nice way to portray Berlin and there are a lot of magazines

doing it. So yes, congrats! If you're ever coming here, it'd be my pleasure to show you round some dancefloors and those much loved cubicles. But until then, take care and once again thanks.

Paul Snowden, Wasted German Youth, via email

I just saw the article—it's *soo* good. One of the first ones I have nothing to complain about! So cool, thanks!

Johanna, Sick Girls/Magnet Booking, via email

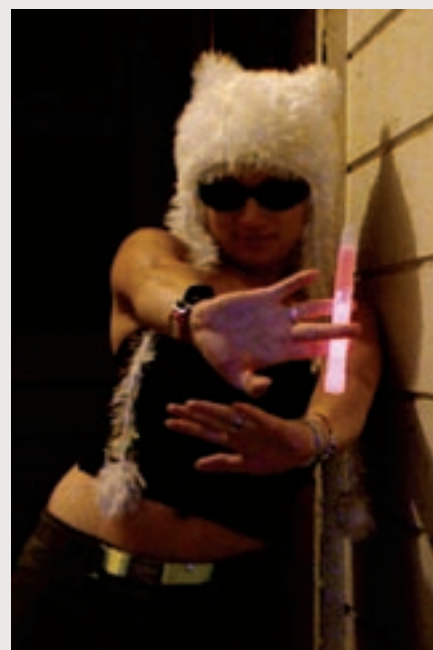
It's all good! Thank you for the nice review of our store, by the way!

All the best,  
Niko, Rotation Records, via email

### Smash Your Head on the Punk Rock

Dear XLR8R,  
It's nice that you electro-geeks finally got on the punk bandwagon with that Society Suckers feature [issue #101, "Society Suckers"]. Dudes shred! Bring back the rock, and start covering Dischord and metal, too, please!

J-Rod, via the web



## RAVE TO THE GRAVE

A few questions for our issue #100 contest winner.

In issue #100, we gave away prizes from 100 different companies to one lucky human who sent us their best rave photo. The winner is 27-year-old Connie Hwong, shown here in the year 2000. We thought we'd ask her some questions about the glory days of glowstick-twirling.

**WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE DJ AT THE TIME THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN?** Back then, it was DJ Spacegirl; she spun acid trance, and had a pretty good following in the New York scene. She also had this really striking platinum hair, so she was always easy to spot, and she was a female DJ, so I think that gave me a feeling of solidarity with her. Nowadays, I listen to a wider range of music. I'm really interested in what Girl Talk is doing; I saw Ratatat live last month and thought their set was fantastic; and I caught Modeselektor's set earlier this summer and loved it.

**WHERE DID YOU GET THE HAT THAT YOU'RE WEARING HERE?** [A] friend gave it to me as a present; she also gave me a matching halter top, which is a look I don't think I ever managed to pull off.

**WHAT IS THE BEST RAVE ACCESSORY?** Even if people ridicule them now, those huge, loose raver pants with cargo pockets were great.

**GLOWSTICKS, MAGIC WAND, OR MICKEY MOUSE HANDS?** No question: glowsticks.

**ARE YOU GOING TO SHARE YOUR PRIZES OR HOARD THEM ALL FOR YOURSELF?** I'm definitely sharing. A bunch of my friends and family are about to receive some kick-ass Christmas/birthday presents, although my dad might be a little bewildered by a t-shirt from some random Dutch techno label....

## BITTER BASTARD'S TOP 10 WORST OF 2006



**1. Ponderous band names** Where once there were "The" bands (The Strokes, The Hives, etc.), 2006 was the year of seeing how many nonsensical words could be crammed into one band title. Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, Skeletons and the Girl-Faced Boys, Architecture in Helsinki... We blame And You Will Know Us By The Trail of Dead for making this whole thing okay.

**2. Nature motifs** Dang. Deer, feathers, wings, dreamcatchers, owls, wolves, and moccasins were big this year. It was like being on a bad trip at Altamont with a bunch of people who wouldn't ever dream of even going camping.

**3. Laptop DJing** Yes, it's cool to have every song at your fingertips, but playing 96 bit-rate MP3s taken off someone's blog sound about as good as the rattling of a tin can. And having your computer crash right in the middle of a hot mix is not where it's at. Watching people try to trainspot Serato records is funny though.

**4. iPod DJ mixer** Speaking of DJing, why haven't they come out with an iPod DJ mixer that works properly yet? Fools be sleeping.

**5. SPAM** Let me get this straight: they've invented a vaccine for HPV and video phones but there is still no reliable way to make me stop receiving emails for VIPAGRA and H00dia. With all the time spent deleting this shit, we could have made a whole other magazine every month. Just kidding (sort of).

**6. Club sound** It's 2006 and the sound in American clubs is still utter shit. It's been so long since I've been in a venue with subs that I've actually forgotten what bass sounds like, much less feels like.

**7. A Bathing Ape** Let's set the record straight—the only thing worse than this overpriced brand is hearing people incessantly talk about it. Even me hating on it is feeding the hype. Hell, we're doing it right now. But I digress. Did you know it costs 25 Euros (around US\$31) just to buy their autumn/winter clothing catalog? Oh, it comes with a Nigo interview and a sticker sheet? Well, then, it's totally worth it.

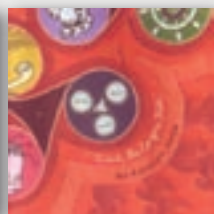
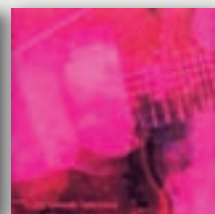
**8. Purple** The color purple tried to blow up for a second, but then everyone realized that the only people that really feel comfortable in shades of grape are wacky old ladies and Prince.

**9. Cat Power live** Am I the only person that hasn't bought into the cult of Chan Marshall? That whole "stage fright" tortured-artist thing is such an act to mask the fact that she doesn't know how to play live. I sure am glad I didn't pay \$40 to see this strung-out skater-jockey mumble through two songs, but I wish she'd give everyone else their money back.

**10. Being afraid** Along with apathy and inertia, aimless fear is just getting really tiring. Fuck an orange terror alert.



# Le TIGRE®



## XLR8R'S "OLD-SCHOOL COOKIE AWARD" CONTEST

Tell your tales and set yourself up with fresh Le Tigre gear and 10 alternative classics from Insound.

Alright, so maybe you remember seeing The Rapture in your buddy's basement for an audience of 30 back in '99. Perhaps you partied with Boards of Canada in some airport parking lot on your way back to Wisconsin after spending all weekend raving in L.A. Either way, it's damn near time someone awards you those long-lost scene points you so very much deserve.

In homage to the days of yore, we'll be handing out an entire modern classic outfit from veteran clothing company Le Tigre to one male and one female contest winner. Each triumphant victor will receive a styled-out polo, hoodie, track jacket, and wristbands (duh!). We're also lacing each winner with 10 of Insound's essential "Sound Saver" albums by a host of vital artists including My Bloody Valentine, Sonic Youth, Mum, Broken Social Scene, Built to Spill, and more.

So just how old-school are you? Send us your best story (under 200 words) about the glory days as you lived them and you may be rewarded kindly.

[www.letigreusa.com](http://www.letigreusa.com), [www.insound.com](http://www.insound.com), [www.savethealbum.com](http://www.savethealbum.com)

**ONE MALE GRAND-PRIZE WINNER RECEIVES:** a full Le Tigre outfit and 10 of Insound's "Sound Saver" classic alternative CDs

**ONE FEMALE GRAND-PRIZE WINNER RECEIVES:** a full Le Tigre outfit and 10 of Insound's "Sound Saver" classic alternative CDs

Entries will be accepted via snail mail and email. Entries must be received by January 16, 2007. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Old School Cookie Award" Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "XLR8R's Old-School Cookie Award Contest" in the subject line.



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## BUSY SIGNAL

Jamaica's next superstar lives up to his off-the-hook moniker.

Words Ross Hogg Photo Afflicted ([www.afflictedyard.com](http://www.afflictedyard.com))

To make it in dancehall, you need an image, a Puritan work ethic, and endless lyrics. But a good catchphrase never hurts. So when you hear “*Sound di big ting dem!*” just before the riddim drops, you know that Reanno Gordon (a.k.a. Busy Signal) has just commanded your full attention.

On *Step Out* (Greensleeves), his first full-length album, the 23-year-old runs the gamut from an ode to his mother to tracks with (and for) the ladies, but the focus is on the frenetic songs that first got him noticed. “Born and Grow” is a DJ Karim-produced love song to his native Jamaica that samples Eric Donaldson’s patriotic “Land of My Birth.” Conversely, “Where I’m From” speaks to his country’s rougher elements and corrupt government. But it’s the title track, with its vocal stutter-step over a trancey instrumental and badman lyrics (“*Bwoy dis, end up inna bodybag, toe tag/Escape ‘pon bicycle, mi don’t drive Jag*”) that has the biggest chance of crossing over to a wider audience.

The album is incredibly polished for an artist with only two years of performances under his belt. The achievement can be attributed in part to his membership in The Alliance—the crew led by the legendary Bounty Killer—whose roster includes Vybz Kartel, Bling Dawg, and Mavado. “[If Bounty] knows that you got a talent and you’re serious about what you’re doing, he will accept you,” says Busy. “He’s [been] there for me throughout my career... like a big brother.” He also counts artists like Capleton and Sizzla as mentors. “They do different music from Bounty Killer, but I try to be an artist that does not really do one topic. It’s dancehall, but at the same time, it’s versatile.”

When asked if he feels that Bounty’s years-long lyrical war with Beenie Man puts him in a precarious position, Busy answers that their battle is bigger than him. “They’ve been doing that before I had any mind of being where I am now,” he explains. But would he respond if Beenie dissed him? “I don’t really compete with my talent. I try to stay focused and do good music so that a wider range of people can enjoy it instead of pointing my song at one person. Right then and there, [that would] make that person’s fans hate me.”

Busy has already found himself in such a situation. Another young upstart, Itonia, has recorded a number of songs aimed directly at Busy. (Ironically, Itonia also has ties to Bounty; the two have even recorded songs together.) “I don’t know that guy... never greet, never meet nowhere,” says Busy of the unprovoked lyrical attacks. “But here’s the thing: [in] Jamaica... the bad mind dem chip in. Whenever you try to make something of yourself, you always have somebody tryin’ to draw you down, to distract you. I try to stay focused as much as possible. Sizzla taught me that, Capleton taught me that. Even Bounty Killer... tells me to stay focused and don’t really pay nonsense no mind. Doing that would have me pinned down beside somebody for the rest of my career.”

Busy Signal’s *Step Out* is out now on Greensleeves. [www.greensleeves.net](http://www.greensleeves.net)



f



1



2



3

## GOOD STUFF

A few of Dopefiend's favorite things.

Clarence Kwan combs the internet so you don't have to. Every day, you can check in on his style blog, Dopefiend, and ask yourself questions like, "Should I eat ramen for a month just to afford that new APC cashmere jacket?" and "Who pays \$600 on eBay for the new Kaws toy?" Hailing from Toronto, 27-year-old Kwan tries to keep the Canadian content on the site high, recommending Vancouver brands including Wings & Horns, Spruce, and Livestock, and Maple Leaf-toting designers such as Alist and Eric Q. With Wu-Tang's *36 Chambers* and Lily Allen booming in the background, Kwan gave us this list of what's hot right now.  
www.dopefiend.ca

### 1. SANTA MUERTE SWEATERS

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### 4. MEKANISM X SPACE INVADER SKATEBOARDS

Mekanism has been making a name for themselves with some quality artist collabs; this Space Invader deck features actual mirror tiles. Hot!

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Text of Light (from left): Lee Ranaldo, DJ Olive, Tim Barnes, Alan Licht, and Ulrich Krieger, taken in Gent, Belgium, 2005 (Christian Marclay not pictured)

# TEXT OF LIGHT

A Sonic Youth guitarist and friends dance soundtrack a legendary filmmaker's visual poetry.

Words Cameron Macdonald Photo Tom Verbruggen

In the 1950s and '60s, American filmmaker Stan Brakhage stripped away every popular notion of "movie" and wrote poetry that danced. He deleted stories, characters, and even sound in nearly 300 of his films, leaving the viewer with only disjointed imagery. He treated the actual reels as art: leaving scratches, tears, and smears on negatives; taping twigs, leaves, and moths to film strips; and painting colors directly onto the film.

"He was a real maverick who had an uncompromising vision," says Sonic Youth guitarist Lee Ranaldo. "He wanted to take film away from just being this Hollywood illustration of a story, and to make something more poetic with it."

Brakhage's raw, hypnotic imagery has driven Ranaldo and a predominately New York City-based crew of veteran improvisers to perform music that taps into his spirit. The ensuing band, named Text of Light (after Brakhage's 1974 film), plays in front of a screen showing Brakhage's films, but the band members turn their backs to

avoid watching the film—leaving the audience to connect the sound with the sights.

"I've looked up and seen the drummer's arm movements mimic a movement in one of the Brakhage films," says guitarist Alan Licht. "The drummer's not even facing the screen." Emitting from the band are electrolyte-bleeding drum hits, guitars and saxophones that drone and wail out of amps, fragments, and the hisses and scratches of lost records. The band only ceases when the film stops.

Ranaldo and Licht formed Text of Light in 2001, after a live performance (that accompanied a Brakhage film) with German electronic-saxophonist Ulrich Krieger. The band debuted at NYC's avant-garde venue Tonic with free-jazz drummer William Hooker and turntable artist Christian Marclay joining the trio. The success of that night kept Text going, and they later recruited electronic experimentalist DJ Olive and percussionist Tim Barnes.

The band recently released a three-disc set, packaged in a metal film canister in homage to

Public Image Limited's post-punk classic, *Metal Box*. The box lacks any Brakhage visuals, but Ranaldo believes the music stands on its own. Both he and Licht compare Text of Light's riot of images and music to the '60s "art happenings," like those at Andy Warhol's Factory studio, where people danced while projected images played and rock bands jammed for hours on end.

Christian Marclay likens the group's work to pieces by modern dance luminary Merce Cunningham, who had dancers perform choreography to music they had never heard before. Marclay also sees a personal connection between Brakhage's technique and his own scratching and scarring of vinyl records. "Both film and vinyl are types of plastics," he says. "They both record something, and are both very fragile. I like that connection."

Text of Light's three-CD set can be ordered through [www.dirter.co.uk](http://www.dirter.co.uk). [www.sonicurbs.com/textoflight](http://www.sonicurbs.com/textoflight)

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C.Neon's Clara Leskovar (left) and Doreen Schulz at art/design workspace Heikonaut, in Berlin. (Photo by Jane Stockdale)

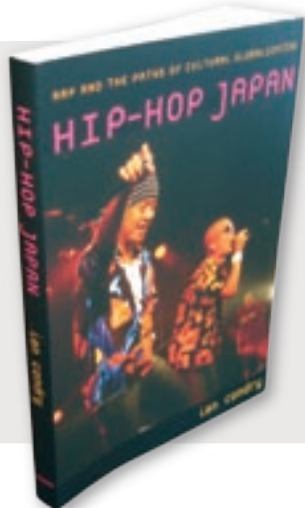
## BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

C.neon presents illuminating designs inspired by Berlin.

Amid the neo-rave/'80s clubwear and serious party frocks of London Fashion Week, C.neon's designs stood out boldly from the black-and-khaki-clad pack. The runway show from C.neon—a brand created in 2001 by Berliners Clara Leskovar and Doreen Schulz—featured a cavalcade of interesting clothes bearing striking, Bauhaus-inspired graphical prints in colors (muted rust, celery, chocolate brown) last seen on '70s macrame wall-hangings, or maybe in the work of Art Deco painter

Erte. C.neon's separates look classy, but come in urban, wearable shapes—hoodies, simple separates, leggings, and (for the guys) baggy, free-flowing tracksuits. (When you start to feel too old for that neon Billionaire Boys Club hoodie, this could be an apt next move for your wardrobe.) The C.neon girls have been super busy—after wrapping up a solo summer show at Berlin's decorative arts museum, the Kunstgewerbe, they were immediately tapped to design a collection for forward-

thinking London chain store Topshop. We caught the pair during a rare moment in their hometown, and took this photo of them while they listened to Johnny Cash's *Live at Folsom Prison*. Leskovar summed up Berlin style for us in one phrase: "We're too poor to wear Versace, and we have too many ideas not to make our own fashion." *Vivian Host*  
www.cneon.de



## RISING SONS

A scholar demystifies the origins and evolution of Japanese hip-hop.

No country has been influenced by American hip-hop culture quite like Japan, and Ian Condry would know. After spending countless hours in Tokyo and its neighboring cities' nightclubs and recording studios (known as *genba*), this scholar compiled his findings into *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization* (Duke University Press; paperback, \$22.95). By no means is this a quick, glossy read—Condry throws out thought-provoking theory on nearly every page. Of his many arguments, perhaps the most intriguing is that Japanese

hip-hop has never been a transitory fad, as many outsiders would like to believe. Ultimately, Condry is determined to prove that while Japanese MCs have always taken influence from American hip-hop and other forms of black culture, they have also created their own identities within the music. Anyone that's interested in—or just plain baffled by—Japanese pop culture will be happy to have Condry's book demystify one of the country's most complex subcultures. *Max Herman*  
www.dukeupress.edu



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### MAN OVERBOARD

A tour diary from Edu K and Daniel Haaksman, Man Recordings' baile funk masters.



**OCTOBER 6: MONTREAL, CANADA** Hands in the air! Our first gig at the Pop Montreal festival. Edu jumped from the stage and took a bath in the crowd and people went berserk. *Vai popozudas!*

**OCTOBER 6: MONTREAL, CANADA** Our man in Montreal, Guillaume Berroyer, alongside Edu K. Watch the gloves—Edu got this pair personally handed to him by Glen Danzig.



**OCTOBER 8: OTTAWA, CANADA** Edu getting down on a female fan in Ottawa. Besides dragging girls on stage, Edu loves to get on his knees to impress girls the classic rock & roll way.



**OCTOBER 7: TORONTO, CANADA** What looks like a bad coke habit is in fact Edu not being used to the air-conditioned rooms in Canadian hotels.



**OCTOBER 8: OTTAWA, CANADA** After days of partying, touring, and being heavily jet-lagged, Daniel takes a nap before the show in Ottawa.

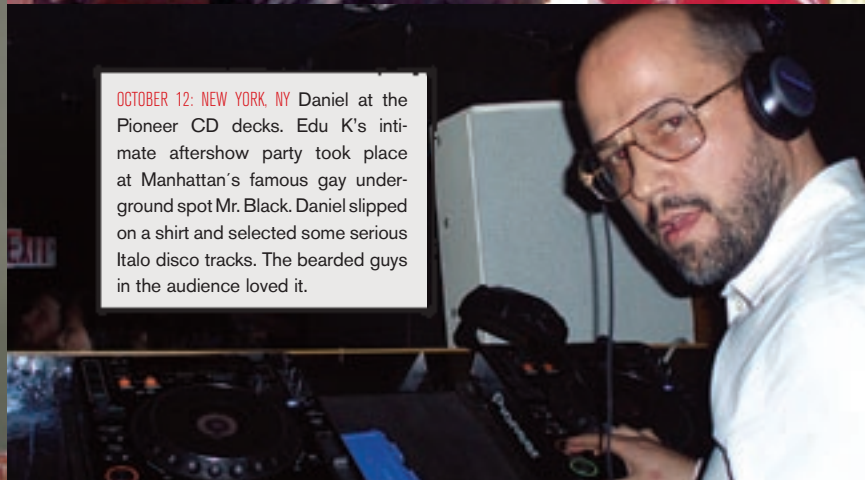
**OCTOBER 14: NEW YORK, NY** Edu K and Zuzuku of New York's Big Mama Industries. Zuzuku remixed Edu's "Hot Mama" into a relaxed, skanking reggae track. The two are like brothers from another mother.



**OCTOBER 9: BOSTON, MA** The Beat Research party, hosted by DJ C and DJ Flack, was one of the best shows of the tour and one of the funniest stage set-ups. Regularly playing the beats from behind Edu K, Daniel was put in a small room behind the stage, where he had to look out of the hole in the wall (on the left) to accompany Edu. Coming from Berlin, he knew how to deal with it.



**OCTOBER 12: NEW YORK, NY** Daniel at the Pioneer CD decks. Edu K's intimate aftershow party took place at Manhattan's famous gay underground spot Mr. Black. Daniel slipped on a shirt and selected some serious Italo disco tracks. The bearded guys in the audience loved it.



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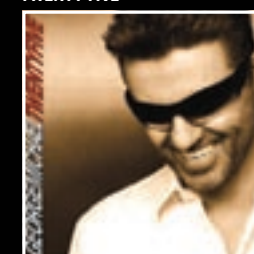
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# FINAL FANTASY

A Toronto violinist and gamer geek LARPs out loud.

**Words Ken Taylor Photo David Nemeroff**

If you thought Rush was geeky—with their hockey-hair mullets and myriad references to wizardry—then you haven't met fellow Canadian Owen Pallett. The 25-year-old Torontonian, who records strikingly original violin compositions and breathy vocals under the moniker Final Fantasy, attempts to “remodel fantasy fiction as a musical medium, and one that is satirical,” he says. Central to Final Fantasy's aesthetic are '80s videogames, Lewis Carroll, and Gore Vidal's *Duluth*.

Trained in violin from a young age, and continuing its study through his time at the University of Toronto, Pallett played in numerous groups, including The Hidden Cameras, Picastro, The Arcade Fire, and Les Mouches (which he describes as “like Grizzly Bear but more aggro and less good”). He also wrote two operas and scored a few videogames alongside his brother, who worked in the gaming industry. After a string of group projects, Pallett decided to go it alone; he recorded his first solo effort as Final Fantasy, *Has a Good Home*, in 2005.

Pallett says *Has A Good Home* “isn't that great,” but his second album, *He Poos Clouds*, sure is. The record finds Pallett channeling singers as far flung as Xiu Xiu's Jamie Stewart and actor/director John Cameron Mitchell while threading together lyrically rich, oddly constructed narratives, including an ode to Toronto real estate mogul Brad Lamb (the brilliant “This Lamb Sells Condos”). Recorded with a string quartet in Barcelona, *He Poos Clouds* followed a couple of basic rules: Every song had to be written for strings and voice (so as to be recreate-able in the solo live setting with a violin and sampler); and, as a whole, the album had to “attempt to modernize each of the eight *Dungeons & Dragons* schools of magic.”

Though most people try to disguise their gaming past, Pallett's pride in his nerdy, theatrical side has paid off. In September, Final Fantasy was awarded Canada's inaugural Polaris Prize (akin to Britain's Mercury Prize), which is based on artistic merit, and chosen by critics from across the country. Having beaten out The New Pornographers, Wolf Parade, Broken Social Scene, and Metric for the award, Pallett's typical Canadian modesty shines through when he discusses the win: “I am skeptical about the designation of an album as ‘best,’ because... I don't like the idea that the quality of an album may be judged on the musical aptitude,” he says, adding, “I would've been extremely happy if any of the other nominees won. Happier, perhaps.”

But twenty grand is twenty grand. “I'm giving \$9000 to the other musicians involved in *He Poos Clouds* because they're all otherwise unemployed or have new babies,” Pallett enumerates. “I'm giving \$5000 to my boyfriend to pay off his student loan. [And] I'm giving \$6000 back to Blocks, [a Canadian artist collective and record label], to finance the making of more ‘not the best’ albums.”

*He Poos Clouds* is out now on Tomlab. [www.finalfantasyeternal.com](http://www.finalfantasyeternal.com), [www.blocksblocksblocks.com](http://www.blocksblocksblocks.com)

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www.durkl.com



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www.houseind.com

## KEEPING IT REEL

A crop of movie buffs turn celluloid fantasies into song.

Don't know Aztec Camera from Cinematic Orchestra? Got They Might Be Giants mixed up with Wild Strawberries? Can't hear "Girls on Film" because "Debaser" is blasting in the back of your mind? Not to worry. *XLR8R's* got the inside scoop on all the studios' plans. With the Christmas movie season upon us, let us steer you through the latest herd of film-fanatic groups. *Ken Taylor*



**Working title:** Camera Obscura

**The pitch:** *Trainspotting* meets *Beautiful Girls*. Lasses from Glasgow frolic around the Scottish countryside; have boyfriends, lose boyfriends, have boyfriends. Sing!

**Who's directing:** Lars Von Trier or some Dogme 95 guy

**Who's paying:** Merge

**The look:** 16mm, natural light, lots of lens flare

**Who's first in line:** Alan McGee and family

[www.camera-obscura.net](http://www.camera-obscura.net)



**Working title:** Film School

**The pitch:** Part *Man Who Fell to Earth*, part *Garden State*. A bunch of young, hip, Klaus Kinski-obsessed San Franciscans dream of the North Sea and indulge in thrills of Ian Curtis proportions.

**Who's directing:** Werner Herzog, of course

**Who's paying:** Beggar's Banquet

**The look:** Super 8, grainy

**Who's first in line:** The jealous, sullen type

[www.filmschoolmusic.com](http://www.filmschoolmusic.com)



**Working title:** Home Video

**The pitch:** A bit of *She's All That* and a touch of *Weird Science*. Two Southern high school students—one dresses in all black and spends his days listening to NIN, the other is a nerdy classical pianist—meet in art class and bet the teacher that together they can overcome the derision of the sneering, stuck-up jocks by building a robotic woman! No, wait! No, a suite of synth pop killers!

**Who's directing:** John Hughes comes out of retirement

**Who's paying:** Defend Music

**The look:** Silver-screen blockbuster

**Who's first in line:** Unsuspecting suburban teens

[www.homevideooffice.com](http://www.homevideooffice.com)



**Working title:** Dirty Projectors

**The pitch:** *Deliverance* mixed with *Liquid Sky*. Lonely guy paints abstract pictures of the weirdest depths of humanity, unearthing unworldly creatures with acoustic and electronic sounds. Ends it all with a track called "To the Mall."

**Who's directing:** The ghost of Harry Smith

**Who's paying:** Marriage

**The look:** High-definition documentary

**Who's first in line:** Record store clerks and other Jandek fans

[www.myspace.com/dirtyprojectors](http://www.myspace.com/dirtyprojectors)



**Working title:** The Hidden Cameras

**The pitch:** *A Clockwork Orange* meets *Hustler White*. A gang of gay dudes from Toronto dresses up like Alex and his droogs, terrorizing blue hairs and indie punks alike with theatrical pop numbers. It's *West Side Story* as told by Quentin Crisp.

**Who's directing:** David LaChapelle (in homage to Derek Jarman)

**Who's paying:** Arts & Crafts

**The look:** 70mm, push-processed color-correction

**Who's first in line:** John Waters

[www.thehiddencameras.com](http://www.thehiddencameras.com)





Publisher Andrew Smith sounds off in SF.



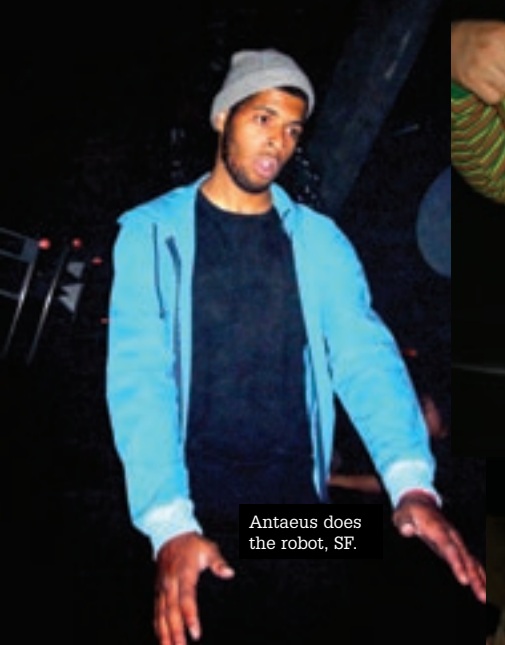
Fine ponies get down, NYC.



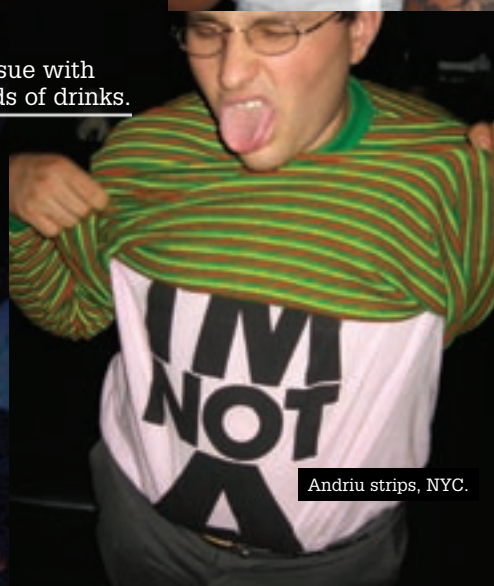
James Murphy plays our SF party at Mezzanine.

# XLR8R TURNS 100

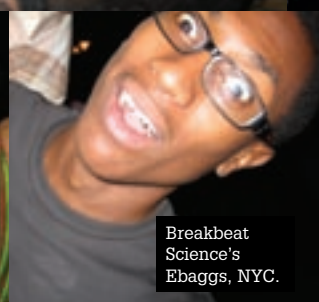
We celebrated our centennial issue with three epic parties, and thousands of drinks.



Antaeus does the robot, SF.



Andriu strips, NYC.



Breakbeat Science's Ebaggs, NYC.



Chris Woodcock and Jialin Luh, SF.



Plug Research's Cameron Porter with Daedelus and Jimmy Tamborello, LA.



Other Music's DJ Duane spins, NYC.



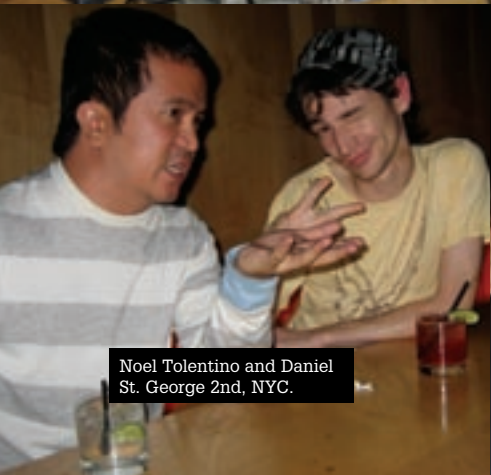
Girl Talk strikes a pose at APT, NYC.



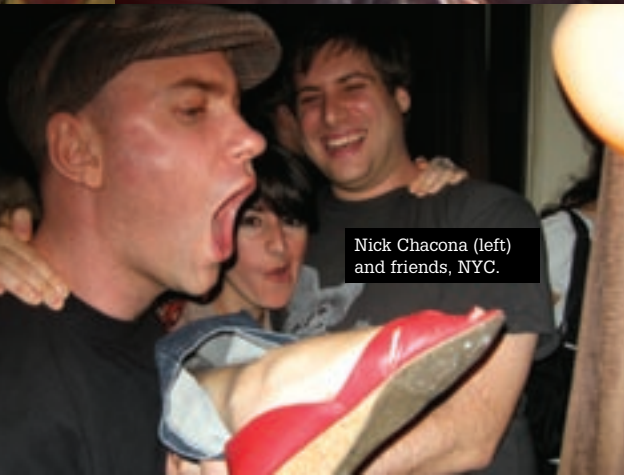
Tigerbeat6's Maria Gonima and Mighty's Ronnie Buder, SF.



A kiss-off from Chris Glancy and crew, LA.



Noel Tolentino and Daniel St. George 2nd, NYC.



Nick Chacona (left) and friends, NYC.



Chromatics' Adam Miller

# CHROMATICS

Northwest post-punks find inspiration everywhere.

Words Josiah Hughes Photo Albert Rossini

Taking a break from a hectic tour schedule, Adam Miller has just returned from shooting videos in a Wisconsin forest with his group, Chromatics. Since they formed in 2000, the Seattle quartet has had an unusual number of personnel changes, but Miller seems unaffected by any of it. "I love everyone that I have ever played music with," he enthuses. "Chromatics is like a foster home for troubled musicians, and [producer/programmer] Johnny Jewel is like the director of the Make-a-Wish foundation."

Similarly, life on the road has taken little toll on Miller's upbeat demeanor. "Touring is a constant source of inspiration," he explains. "We love all the interactions that occur en route to the gigs. The scenery, the different people we meet—there's always something to remember. The other night we were driving in rural Indiana and I saw a mountain lion cub."

For anyone who has heard Chromatics, this positivism may come as a surprise. A pastiche of dub, Kraut rock, and gritty post-punk, the group's first two records (*Chrome Rats vs. Basement Rutz* and *Plaster Hounds*, both on Gold Standard Labs) reveled in gloomy dirges and deathly subject matter. Their forthcoming full-length, *Shining Violence*

(Troubleman Unlimited), explores similar themes of fatality and loneliness. "I think we all have an undeniable attraction to our own undoing, both as individuals and as a culture," Miller states in describing the record's title.

But while the subject matter is similar, the music has changed drastically. As demonstrated on the "Nite" 12" that dropped earlier this year, Chromatics' new sound is built on simple piano refrains and synthesized arpeggios. In place of gritty guitars and frantic beats, the instrumentation is noticeably subdued, and songs like "Baby" and the soon-to-be classic "In the City" have plenty of room to explore layered dynamics.

Miller attributes these new elements to having more time. "Chromatics recorded our first album in three days, and Johnny spent three months mixing it," he explains. "With *Shining Violence*, we

made a record that was allowed to develop in the studio. The goal, as with any of our records, is to not sound like any other Chromatics record. All of the songs have a distinct rhythmic core and purpose—even the songs without drums."

In a musical climate where defining a band's sound is crucial, Chromatics remains an enigma. But if you ask Miller, they're just making punk rock. "We are punk like the Velvet Underground is gangsta, Suicide is krunk, and Yung Joc is new wave," he says. "In our world, there's no difference. Progressive artists refusing to accept the status quo—to us, that's punk."

Chromatics "Shining Violence" 12-inch is out now on Troubleman Unlimited. [www.troublemanunlimited.com](http://www.troublemanunlimited.com), [www.myspace.com/chromaticsmusic](http://www.myspace.com/chromaticsmusic)



**A new romantic creates ethereal techno with an emotional core.**

Words Patrick Sisson

Photo courtesy Force Tracks

After dawn breaks over the quaint university town of Uppsala, Sweden, many residents find themselves sharing their morning with Erik Möller. An anchor for Swedish National Radio, he kickstarts weekdays with news, weather, and traffic, enunciating with the type of steely efficiency many assume is a national character trait.

Meanwhile, his *other* studio job—producing stripped-down, romantically charged techno tracks under the deliberately vague moniker Unai—gives people plenty of reasons to make it a late night. His long-delayed full-length, *A Love Moderne* (released in May on the resurrected Force Tracks label), is full of sparse compositions that make a massive impact, combining springy, dub-infected beats with his own elegant and wistful vocals. Self-described as a meeting between techno and pop soul, it's a straight shot to the heart and the hips for a producer who once focused more on sonic complexity.

"In the late '90s I was very into complicated rhythms and sound atmospheres and got bored," says Möller. "I kept pushing the sound until it didn't hit me in the same way. Then I underwent this evolution where I ventured from the abstract towards something more accessible and emotional."

Growing up in a village of about 400 people outside Uppsala, Möller first heard electronic music blasting from the nearby summer homes of vacationers from Stockholm. Despite the isolated setting he started meeting like-minded music fans—a group of Uppsala producers who called themselves Audionaut—and briefly played in a synth-pop band before producing his first tracks in 1995. Making music under various aliases (including Spinform) for labels like Punkt and Raum, he realized, through enough experimentation and excess, that Unai was his true focus. And by the time he started work on his second Unai album (a follow-up to 2001's *Rebel Swing*), he had honed in on a concept.

"I wanted it to be obvious to people I was making a techno record with an over-the-top love theme," he explains. "Before I think I was too subtle."

He cut to the chase with the 2003's "I Like Your Style," an inviting series of bubbling beats capped off by his coy vocals, the first time he sang without obscuring his voice into anonymity with effects. The single would have been quickly followed up by *A Love Moderne*, but a distributor problem temporarily disabled Force Tracks' revival; despite the delay, the album still sounds current in the wake of bands like Junior Boys. With plans to put together more Unai tracks and talk of a new project—simply called I—with Chicago-based label Soul Dub Sounds, looks like Möller will be logging plenty more time behind the mic.

"New Unai [material] is definitely in the works," he says definitively. "I'm a very restless person."

Unai's *A Love Moderne* is out now on Force Tracks.

[www.audionaut.com](http://www.audionaut.com), [www.force-tracks.net](http://www.force-tracks.net)



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FROM TOP: Apparat (Photo by Roseann Barnhill); a production workshop; Green Velvet playing at Neumo's; Thomas Fehlmann (Photos by Christopher Nelson)

## SPACE NEEDLES

Decibel Festival again turns Seattle into techno paradise.

Seattle, WA is famous for many things, and a large techno following isn't one of them. But for one long weekend a year, Decibel Festival turns the Emerald City into a parallel universe of blip and shuffle. This year, almost 10,000 people flocked to the event (held September 14-17, 2006), according to event founder Sean Horton, and they were clearly frothing at the mouth for minimal techno, Ableton Live tutorials, weirdo visuals and, well, dancing. So much so that, during a Saturday night DJ set from Green Velvet, the floor at Neumo's was literally rippling under the weight. Apparently mini-earthquakes are *de rigueur* for this fest, as made evident by further devastation from Alex Smoke, Apparat, Jerry Abstract, and Speedy J. Battle wounds sustained from nighttime partying were mended over daytime panel discussions and production workshops, while the ambitious tuned in to a plethora of local and international artists (including Mexico's Fax and Panoptica, Sweden's Andreas Tillander, and Seattle's own Foscil and Plan B), who played across six venues in the city's Capitol Hill neighborhood. With so much crammed into a four-day period (including a new "Optical" program featuring audio/visual performances), Decibel Festival might be the United States' fastest growing electronic music event of its kind, no small achievement for a city known more for Alice in Chains than laptop rock. *Brandon Ivers*  
www.dbfestival.com



## MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Motion Man names his top five defensive players in the NFL.

As a former wide receiver and cornerback in Fremont, CA, Bay Area rapper Motion Man drops more NFL references than a rookie punt returner drops balls. He's known for twisted verbal assaults and classic rhymes (over beats by the likes of Kutmasta Kurt, DJ Vadim, and Kool Keith) but you're more likely to find his radio tuned to SportsTalk than hip-hop. Following the September release of his last album, *Pablito's Way*—featuring collabos with Gift of Gab, Mistah FAB, and Too \$hort—Motion has finally had time to catch up on Friday night football. We checked with him about his top five defensive players in the NFL today. *Jesse Terry*  
www.threshrecs.com, www.myspace.com/motionman

### 1) SHAWNE MERRIMAN, LINEBACKER, SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

"You got here a linebacker who's young, can wreak havoc in the back field, and take on offensive linemen."

### 2) DEANGELO HALL, CORNERBACK, ATLANTA FALCONS

"Hall is one of the nicest one-on-one cover guys in the league, and he's dangerous with a ball in his hands."

### 3) ROY WILLIAMS, STRONG SAFETY, DALLAS COWBOYS

"A monster at the line of scrimmage, not scared to stick his nose in."

### 4) JULIUS PEPPERS, DEFENSIVE END, CAROLINA PANTHERS

"He's got athletic-freak speed. Not many running away from him."

### 5) JASON FERGUSON, NOSE TACKLE, DALLAS COWBOYS

"Ferguson absorbs blocks all game long and can penetrate into the backfield."



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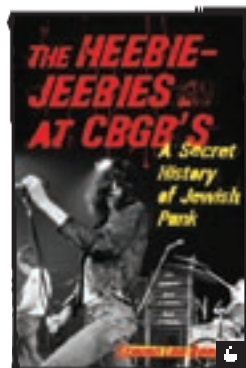
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**SPIN CYCLE**  
News and gossip  
from the  
music world

In October, **Tiefschwarz** launched their own label, **Souvenir Music**, with "Hey," a single produced under their darker pseudonym **Ichundu**; tracks are forthcoming from **Phonique**, **Riton**, and **Roman Flügel**. • Pioneering house imprint **Strictly Rhythm** has partnered with **Defected Records** to reissue compilations and classic singles from **Armand Van Helden**, **Masters at Work**, and **Todd Terry**, and to make the catalog available online. • On November 14, Microsoft launched **Zune**, a digital-media player/download service that will compete with iPod and iTunes. Zune players will feature built-in wireless technology, an FM tuner, and a three-inch LCD video screen. • Olympia, WA's groundbreaking **Kill Rock Stars** label celebrated its 15th birthday last month. At the same time, label founder **Slim Moon** turned over the title of President to **Portia Sabin**; Moon will work as Nonesuch Records' senior director of A&R. • **Beck's** latest album *The Information* was denied entry into the UK charts. The Official Chart Company (OCC), the UK Top 40's governing body, said the sticker sets and DVD that accompany the CD construed an "unfair advantage." • After rumored pressure from

the actual group, **Ying Yang Twins** changed their latest album title from *2 Live Crew* to *Chemically Imbalanced*. The first single, "1st Booty on Duty," is a record about strip-club DJs. • Author Steven Lee Beeber recently released *The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: A Secret History of Jewish Punk*; find out more at [www.jewpunk.com](http://www.jewpunk.com). • New York nightclub **Avalon**—formerly Peter Gatién's ill-fated **Limelight**—has once again been seized due to unpaid taxes. • **The Sónar Festival** tackled new territory in October, presenting programs in Tokyo and Seoul. The former featured **De La Soul**, **Altern8**, and **Incredible Beatbox Band**, a new project from **Yellow Magic Orchestra's Yukihiro Takahashi**; the Seoul edition included performances from Spain's **Angel Molina**, **Griffi**, and **2D2**, Japan's **Doravideo**, and Korea's **DJBK**, **Lee Gun**, **Giro**, and **Hojun**. • Virginia natives **The Clipse** and **Timbaland** now have a place to buy brands like Crooks & Castles, Prps, Edwin Japan, and Greedy Genius in their own backyard: **Commonwealth**. Find Norfolk, VA's cutting-edge retail space online at [www.cmonwealth.com](http://www.cmonwealth.com). • Following a bidding war from the majors, 24-year-old hyphy rapper **Mistah FAB** signed a deal with



Atlantic to release records through his own imprint, Faeva After/Thizz Entertainment. He also has his own skateboard wheel, the Yellow Bus model, via Hubba Wheels. • Last year, the **Cool Hunting** website collaborated with thehappycorp's Doug Jaeger to create a series of video podcasts, and they're up to 50 now. Get inspired at [www.coolhunting.com/video](http://www.coolhunting.com/video). • *Party of Five* and *Mean Girls* star **Lacey Chabert** will be the voice of Princess Elise in the new **Sonic The Hedgehog** game for PS3 and Xbox360. • **Kid Robot** continues vinyl dominance by releasing figurines based on cartoon band **Gorillaz** and Stones Throw/Adult Swim collaboration **Chrome Children** (due February 2007). • On Friday, October 6, music retailer **Tower Records** was auctioned to Great American Group for \$134.3 million dollars. The organization immediately began going-out-of-business sales at the chain's 89 stores, spread over 20 states. • The Mars Volta's **Omar Rodriguez-Lopez** has just released a collaborative, vinyl-only 12" EP with Can vocalist **Damo Suzuki** on GSL; it's available now at [www.goldstandardlabs.com](http://www.goldstandardlabs.com). • A **Lady Sovereign** cover of **Sex Pistols'** "Pretty Vacant" will appear on the next soundtrack album to hit TV show *The O.C.* • Via their online MP3 store Bleep.com, **Warp Records** recently helped resurrect the career of Bradford, UK's bleep pioneers **Unique 3**, via a Bleep.com contest to remix the group's 1989 hit "The Theme;" the trio is now affiliated with breaks label **Fat!** and they DJ around London. • Sports fashion gets obsessively detailed at [www.uniwatchblog.com](http://www.uniwatchblog.com). • Check out new videos from **Spank Rock**, **Van She**, **The Knife**, and more at [www.xlr8r.com/videos.php](http://www.xlr8r.com/videos.php). • And we out...

1. The Mars Volta's Cedric Bixler-Zavala and Omar Rodriguez-Lopez (right); 2. Spank Rock; 3. Beck; 4. Mistah FAB; 5. Tiefschwarz; 6. Steven Lee Arthur's *The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: A Secret History of Jewish Punk*; 7. Zune player



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# Best Artist of 2006 JUSTICE

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST TYPE: SPARKY HARDISTY

For bringing heavy distortion to the disco via "Waters of Nazareth," a glitchy electro anthem of biblical proportions. For backing this track with the squalling, pumping, start-stopping, unforgettable "Let There Be Light" on the flip, then veering left and getting ghetto-house iconoclast DJ Funk to bounce his ass all over the remix. For whipping vocals from Simian into the hand-raising, hair-raising peace-and-loveism of "Never Be Alone Again," created in 2004 but still banging (and licensed to EMI) in the '06. For mashing together Modeselektor, Inner City, The Prodigy, and Mr. Oizo in their unpredictable DJ sets, thus turning ordinary dancefloors into mosh pits of positivity. For leading the charge of second-wave French house madness while always repping their crew, the mighty Ed Banger Records massive. For having fun at all costs, and DJing dressed as M&M's. For cleverly making mincemeat of tracks by N.E.R.D. and Fatboy Slim, then promising something totally different for their forthcoming 2007 album.

For one dance nation, indivisible, with liberty and Justice for all.



Best of 2006

BY JUSTICE'S  
XAVIER DE ROSNAY &  
GASPARD AUGE

**BEST ARTIST:** **Fancy** People used to say this French rock band is a blend between The Ramones and The Jackson 5 because of the singer's haircut. We'll just say it was our best live rock experience ever.

**WORST ARTIST:** **None** Instead of talking about artists nobody cares about, we'd like to celebrate the best DJ of 2006, our labelmate Feadz. We usually don't like DJs, but he's one of a kind.

**BEST ALBUM:** **Jackson and his Computer Band *Smash* (Warp)** Romantic computer music... exactly how it should be.

**WORST ALBUM:** **None** I am afraid we didn't buy albums this year, except the one above.

**BEST 12" SINGLE:** **Kavinsky "Testarossa Autodrive" (Record Makers)** Heroic music that sounds like the theme from *Knight Rider* or any B-movie fiction featuring a motorized hero.

**BEST RECORD LABEL:** **Ed Banger** Are we allowed to answer our own label?

**BEST LIVE EVENT/FESTIVAL:** **Pukkelpop Festival in Belgium** One of the best moments of our summer tour.

**BEST CLUB OR VENUE:** **Trash at The End, London** Look out for the tissue guy.

**BEST MUSIC TREND:** **Return of the filtered disco.** I can feel it.

**WORST MUSIC TREND:** **Return of the filtered disco**

**MOST ANTICIPATED ALBUM OF 2007:** **DFA1979's new album.** The one that they will never do, 'cause they split last year.

**BEST MUSIC HARDWARE:** **Few hardware things we use are newer than 1979.**

**BEST MUSIC SOFTWARE:** **Apple GarageBand** We used this a lot for making the album. This is just amazing—digital music for everybody.

**ELECTRONIC GADGET YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT:** **Milton Bradley's Pocket Simon**

**BEST VISUAL ARTIST:** **So Me** Thank god he's doing all the visual stuff for Justice.

**BEST ART EXHIBIT:** **Zongamin's Suzumu Mukai and Will Sweeney at Colette, Paris.**

**BEST T-SHIRT LINE:** **We only wear t-shirts when our real shirts are in the laundry.**

**BEST CLOTHING LABEL:** **Revolver, Reebok, and Citizen watches**

**BEST STYLE TREND:** **We don't know.** But we'd love to not see multi-colored glossy sneakers again, please.

**WORST STYLE TREND:** **There are no bad styles, just bad people.**

**BEST MEDIA ITEM:** **The *Looping* DVD by French illustrators Mrzyk et Moriceau** It wasn't made in 2006, but we love it. It's a long sequence of drawing/morphing loops by the guys who did the video for Air's "Don't Be Light." Druggy. Oh, and also *Lost*—we got completely brainwashed by this soap.

# Best Artists



HOT CHIP



GNARLS BARKLEY



TV ON THE RADIO



SKREAM

**TV ON THE RADIO** I remember seeing these guys at Starfoods back in 2003 when their *Young Liars* EP just came out, and now I feel like a nerdy super-fan. Besides being really nice guys, they've easily become one of the best bands innovating rock music today. I'll never forgive myself for leaving their secret show at Union Pool to have horrendous, drunken sex with a stranger. *Caural, Mush Records*

In my opinion they are the most unique musical artists out there today. They have melted so many genres together to create a soaring sound of their own. *Drew Reynolds, photographer*

**GNARLS BARKLEY** With Gnarls, Cee-lo really gets what he deserves. Live, he's a crazy entertainer, a great vocalist, a true showman, and a great master of ceremonies with his band. He's the pope of future soul. And his costumes are so cool. When indie heroes go mainstream and do a great job, it's got to be said. *Matthieu Gazier, Ekler's o'shock*

**TIMBALAND** Most people would call him a producer, but he's also an influential artist who has consistently made the most interesting and future-thinking pop music of the last decade. He had the power and time to re-invent Nelly Furtado and Justin Timberlake with two great albums in the same year so, surely he and Missy should have another *Miss E...So Addictive* up their sleeves. *Outputmessage, Ghostly Intl.*

**HOT CHIP** Friendly, funny, and charmingly quirky—the kind of band you'd want to be set up with on a date. *Cheryl Taruc, Flavorpill contributing editor*

**EDAN** If this guy is performing anywhere remotely near your town, and you don't go, you better have a great excuse. Something like, "While I was on my way to the Edan show my grandma died, my girlfriend cheated on me, and I ate some bad spinach and came down with E. Coli." *Nate Nelson, Stones Throw*

**SWITCH** If you haven't heard Switch's remixes of Lily Allen, Futureheads, Spank Rock, Dr. Evil, Hot Chip, Pharrell, MIA, Bonde Do Role, etc., go to some blog and find them, then go on your blog and post them. *Justin Montag, iTunes*

## WORST ARTISTS

**PANIC! AT THE DISCO** I read an article on the band last month and even they admitted that their favorite bands didn't want to tour with them. Ouch. *Celeste Tabora, Solid PR*

**SHAKIRA** I'm glued to my screen in disbelief every time she's on TV. She can't sing, she can't dance, and she's an offense to people who can actually yodel properly. *Georgina Cook, photographer*

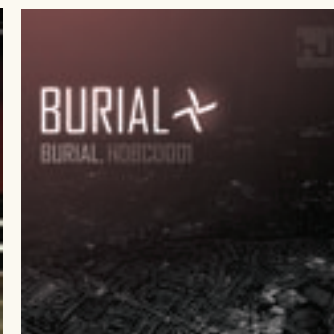
**SKREAM** Almost everything he touches turns to gold, and people have adopted his sound all over the world. Awesome power. *Kid Kameleon, XLR8R writer*

**BOOKA SHADE** This duo has a talent for emotive synth work and subtle build-ups that rival Depeche Mode (for whom they opened in Berlin). *Movements* is Ecstasy music that sounds like all the best party nights wrapped into one. And they're captivating live—no "real band," no bells 'n' whistles, just plenty of percussion and pure heart. *Vivian Host, XLR8R editor*

**LADY SOVEREIGN** I mean, come on. That voice. There's no way anyone can actually handle that crap. Give me Roots Manuva or the sound of tin cans clanking together—both are infinitely more interesting. *Justin Kay, Industrial-Organic*

**FERGIE** When you hear her tracks, it's like all the nastiness of L.A. busting a nut in your hair. *Derek Morris, Trophy Graphics*

# Best Albums



**THE KNIFE SILENT SHOUT (Mute)** For all that it contained—traces of music as disparate as Stina Nordenstam, Cyndi Lauper, Plastikman, and trance—*Silent Shout* nevertheless sounded as if conceived in isolation, as if born from a bunker mentality. *Silent Shout* (and "Forest Families," in particular) was so good I began to feel vaguely obsessed by it. *David Hemingway, XLR8R writer*

Dark, sexy pop music that makes you wonder why the charts are full of such shit. Pop music that's deep and rich and still accessible. *Bryan Black, Motor*

My brother and sister are cool and all, but they certainly don't make emotional techno pop that will be revered for years to come. Listening to this album for the first time was reminiscent of my first encounter with Björk's *Post*. It's like welcoming a ghost under your skin—in a good way. *Susan Langan, iTunes*

**BURIAL BURLAL (Hyperdub)** Kind of a weak year. Thankfully, this one came and gave the bloggers much to rave about and the rest of us a tranquil soundtrack for those hazy moments just before sunrise and just after sunset... *Deadbeat, ~scape*

One of the rare albums that I can listen [to] from the beginning until the end, then repeat. *Ghislain Poirier, Bounce le Gros/Chocolate Industries*

**J DILLA DONUTS (Stones Throw)** *Donuts* and *The Shining* were amazing, especially considering the circumstances they were made under. But Dilla's untimely passing and continued canonization by the biggest names in hip-hop made this the year when people really took time to discover (or revisit) this great producer's work. *Patrick Sisson, XLR8R writer*

There are beat records around from Madlib (who comes a close second with the Beat Konducta records), Alchemist, etc., but Dilla was able to take someone else's work and make it his own; he made one-and-a-half-minute songs that turned heads and made diggers run to the store. It's almost a shame that folks had to spit over the songs... I said almost. *Geoffrey Wilson, Consumer's Research & Development label*

**GRIZZLY BEAR YELLOW HOUSE (Warp)** Defying category (and unfair Animal Collective comparisons), Grizzly Bear's *Yellow House* set the benchmark for modern pop music, and added another timeless record to the Warp canon. *Josiah Hughes, XLR8R writer*

**OWUSU & HANNIBAL LIVING WITH OWUSU & HANNIBAL (Ubiquity)** If you stuck Simon & Garfunkel, J Dilla, Donald Fagen, and Matthew Herbert in a studio at the same time this is how it would sound. A perfect blend of black music and white music. *Mats Karlsson, Raw Fusion*

## WORST ALBUMS

**DJ SHADOW THE OUTSIDER (Universal)** Based on the first single, "3 Freaks," this could have been an album-of-the-year contender, just like his last two were. Instead we got a palimpsest of guitar wankery, limp beats, and weak raps ("DJ Shadow in this bitch"). Not even E-40 could save it. *Kid Kameleon, XLR8R writer*

**MOBB DEEP BLOOD MONEY (Interscope)** First off, I love these cats, but damn was I disappointed! The production was not good by any means! *Amir, Kon & Amir*

**ZERO 7 THE GARDEN (Atlantic)** Gosh, they used to be the genre-defining heroes of chill, didn't they? This time 'round they just did a big, boring commercial poo instead of an album. C'mon boys, at least give me some hooks. *Nick Philip, Imaginary Foundation*

**LUPE FIASCO FOOD & LIQUOR (Atlantic)** If only for all Lupe fanboys who act like no one else has made good music in years. Open your ears to other forms of "conscious rap" and loosen the straps on your backpack. *Ross Hogg, XLR8R writer*



## TOP 5 CDS I LISTENED TO WHILE MAKING DINNER IN 2006

By Chris Richards (Ris Paul Ric)

**1. CASSIE CASSIE (Bad Boy)** In the future we'll have robots to cook our meals, but for now we'll have to settle for R&B androids. I love the simplicity of this album. It sounds like Janet Jackson fronting Kraftwerk.

**2. DJ DRAMA & LIL' WAYNE DEDICATION #2 MIXTAPE (Gangsta Grillz)** Dude is the best rapper out there right now, no question. I've burned more than a couple meals hitting the rewind button ("Did he just shout out Roger Federer?!") instead of minding the stove top.

**3. BLAQSTARR I'M BANGING 1.5 MIXTAPE (Blaqstarr.com)** If I need to whip up dinner in a jiffy, I listen to this B-more club oddball/genius. Some of it's hard ("Hands up! Thumbs down!"), some of it's catchy ("Ryder Girl"), but most of it's just bizarre.

**4. THE KNIFE SILENT SHOUT (Mute)** The scariest album I heard this year, rife with creepy Genesis-sounding synths and pitch-shifted vocals. Perhaps more apropos as a midnight-snack soundtrack.

**5. LOW B AND DELUXXX SNAP OR DIE MIXTAPE (Hollertronix)** No matter how hard I argue that snap music is like The Ramones of Southern rap, my girlfriend hates this shit. So when I need the kitchen to myself, this mix is on repeat.

Washington D.C.'s Rubber Bullets (Chris Richards & Dave Nada) is about to blow. [www.myspace.com/rubberbulletsmusic](http://www.myspace.com/rubberbulletsmusic)





## TOP 10 12-INCH SINGLES OF 2006 By Flosstradamus

**1. E-40 FEAT. KEAK DA SNEAK "TELL ME WHEN TO GO" (Sick Wid It/Jive)** This song really got things going for the hyphy movement outside of the Bay Area. We played this at a show once, kids started crowd surfing, and eventually kicked a huge tile in the roof out.

**2. RICK ROSS "HUSTLIN" (Def Jam)** Arguably the best club rap single of the year. Had hipsters and real G's alike chanting, "Hustlin! Hustlin!"

**3. JUSTICE "LET THERE BE LIGHT (DJ FUNK REMIX)" (Ed Banger)** Juke and ghetto are such a Midwest thing, so I wasn't sure how people were going to take this; then we played it in Montreal and kids freaked out. In conclusion, Chicago juke and Detroit ghetto are coming back in a big way.

**4. HOT CHIP "OVER AND OVER (DIPLO BOJANGLES REMIX)" (white)** When I first heard "Over and Over" I thought to myself, "You know, this track is good, but it would sound much better with Pitbull screaming the lyrics to 'Bojangles' over it." Thanks Wes, you did it again.

**5. LUPE FIASCO "KICK, PUSH" (Atlantic)** Ah, yes! Produced by Chicago native Soundtrakk, this is easily one of the freshest rap cuts of '06. Super clean drums, and Lupe gets very nice on the vocals.

**6. KID SISTER "DAMN GIRL" (white)** Kid Sister's first single, produced by A-Trak, is on some '80s electro, poplock-type shit. Let it percolate!

**7. DAFT PUNK "PRIME TIME OF YOUR LIFE (PARA ONE REMIX)" (EMI France)** This track starts out straight four-on-the-floor dance, then makes this sudden tempo switch, droppping from 130 to about 86. We usually drop a club rap track right over the middle of it. Works every time.

**8. SPANK ROCK "BUMP (SWITCH REMIX)" (Big Dada)** Spank Ro! Obviously a good year for these kids. This one was a heater—both the original and my personal favorite, the Switch remix. They mean "bump" like R. Kelly's "Bump 'n' Grind," right? Right?

**9. TRACKADEMICKS "ENJOY WHAT YOU DO" (white)** This shit slaps! I've dropped this record pretty much every night since I got it. Oakland's Trackademicks is definitely one of the producers you're going to be hearing many things about in 2007. Yee!

**10. YUNG JOC "GOIN' DOWN" (Bad Boy)** Honorable mention. Do the motorcycle.

Flosstradamus is a Chicago DJ/production duo known for tearin' up the club. [www.myspace.com/flosstradamus](http://www.myspace.com/flosstradamus)

## Best record labels



ED BANGER LABEL ART

**ED BANGER** A recording artist's/label's graphic identity has the potential to be as important a communication/marketing tool as the music itself. To this effect, Ed Banger Records is killing it. So Me brings a unique hand-drawn/illustrative flair while maintaining his own unique perspective on the art of the 12-inch. Oh, and they got some fly beats, too. *Dust La Rock, Knuckleduster*

Ed Banger is the reason I finally broke down and started ordering my vinyl online (paying more for the shipping than for the vinyl). So Me's art kills shit, and they currently have one of the most solid artist lineups (Feadz, Mr. Oizo, Mr.Flash!!, Sebastian, Justice); and Uffie, of course. Okay, no, Uffie has little or nothing to do with this. *Bryant Rutledge, XLR8R*

Daft Punk manager Pedro Winter once again reigns over dubland! With names like Feadz, DJ Mehdi, and Justice, and releases that bang harder than a million sledgehammers, who wouldn't be in love with this record label? *Patrick Rood, Cut NYC/Dirty Down*

Forget the minimal music in clubs—it's too boring. Ed Banger throws it down, along with other French labels like Kitsune and Institubes. Hard synth-dance, electro-disco-break, Eurocrunk—whatever you want to call it, it's so powerful on the dancefloor. You can scream, get drunk, stage dive, headbang, have fun, have sex, or dance alone to this. *Matthieu Gazien, Ekler'o'shock*

**RHYMESAYERS** Although not all their releases this year have been stellar, the label's grassroots mindset hasn't changed since day one. Plus, they are all good folks who are doing good things for hip-hop—a rarity nowadays. *David Ma, XLR8R writer*

**DC RECORDINGS** While Output sadly bowed out of the game, DC was left with the task of that whole "making the indie kids dance" nonsense and instead of reaching for lame houseelectrotech-noclash, they took to psych, Krautrock, and dub to flavor an unbroken string of top dance tunes. *Stephen Christian, Warp Records*

**XL RECORDINGS** Once again, XL Recordings brings depth and diversity. [The band] Various, although the album was disappointing, is truly doing something new, and I listened to Thom Yorke's record while cooking dinner every night for a month. Best audiovisual moment of the year though: when a couple bars of Yorke's "Black Swan" leak out the radio in *A Scanner Darkly*. *Alex Threadgold, Sound-Ink*

**DOMINO** I don't love everything they do, but they seem to have the most cohesive yet diverse roster around. *Jason Forrest, Cock Rock Disco*

**SUB POP** It's just unfair that a label can remain so relevant after nearly 20 years. Must be that ol' Seattle karma: endure day after day of shitty weather, claim the world's best record label as your own. Never mind *Nevermind*, 2006 has been a banner year for Sub Pop, with quality releases from Band of Horses, CSS, Wolf Eyes, The Thermals, Comets on Fire, and The Album Leaf. *Steve Marchese, scissorkick.com*

**RHINO** In a year of not too many solid artist albums, I tended to retreat to familiar favorites, and Rhino had that shit on lock. Killer reissue packs from T-Rex, The Cure, Depeche Mode, and The Jesus and Mary Chain, along with the absolutely bad-ass goth box *A Life Less Lived* had me dancing around the apartment like a stoned 10th-grader. *Ken Taylor, XLR8R Managing Editor*

## Best live events



**COACHELLA 2006** My god! Gnarl Barkley, Lyrics Born, Tosca and Gilles Peterson (and Earl Zinger at both), Louie Vega, Jamie Lidell, Coldcut... All quality performances that were (mostly) too short. An improvement from 2005. *Velanche Stewart, XLR8R writer*

Take the Reading or Leeds festivals, and subtract the mud, angry drunks, and urine. *Derek Morris, Trophy Graphics*

Daft Punk at Coachella was so amazing. Even with no new record out, what the duo achieved with this gig will be talked about for a long, long time. One of the few times where it actually made sense to look at the guys behind the decks. *Bruno Natal, XLR8R writer*

**LIARS AT RICHARD'S, VANCOUVER, BC** The show was pretty fantastic. There was a really strong, random energy throughout the show; like this really fantastic, casual unprofessionalism that momentarily abolished the performer-to-audience hierarchy. The whole vibe totally contradicted the brooding pagan chanting and Sonic Youth-style feedback symphony. Totally boggling. *Andy Dixon, Ache Records*

## Best venues

**RECOMBINANT MEDIA LABS, SAN FRANCISCO** 16-point surround what!? No one can touch this shnizzle. They could rent out the floor-shakers alone in this place as the world's largest group massage chair... Pure bass bliss!!!! *Deadbeat, ~scape*

The new, improved Recombinant Media Labs in S.F.: 10-channel immersive HD video array, 16.8.2 surround speaker array, and a curator with fantastic taste in music and gear. *Justin Maxwell, Volsoc/Palette Recordings*

Remember all that "immersive media" and "sensory convergence" hyperbole from the early '90s? Well get your arse down to Recombinant Labs. It's tomorrow already! *Nick Philip, Imaginary Foundation*



**CHICAGO, ALL SUMMER LONG** The Pitchfork [Intonation] Festival made me proud to live in this city where a festival like this can happen. And the Empty Bottle is still doing it; I love that fucking place. *Geoffrey Wilson, Consumer's Research and Development*

Between Pitchfork's Intonation Festival, *Wire's* Adventures in Modern Music festival, and the Touch and Go 25th Anniversary, Chicago left every other city in the dust. What do you have, New York, a few concerts in a pool? *Patrick Sisson, XLR8R writer*

**SOULWAX LIVE** It was as if everything I imagined in my head that I wanted to hear and feel that night came true. *Mathhead, Trouble & Bass*

**JELLY NYC'S POOL PARTIES IN MCCARREN PARK, BROOKLYN** One weekend it was Spank Rock, the next a screening of the classic film *Style Wars*. Dodgeball, Brooklyn Ale, giant slip 'n' slides, and hipsters galore made this a fun time for all. *Dust La Rock, Knuckleduster*

**SÓNAR, BARCELONA** Their production for that amount of people was forward-thinking and very high quality. *Brad Roulier, Beatport*

## Best venues

**PLASTIC PEOPLE, LONDON** The sound system is bananas and hosting both the Bash and FWD>> parties makes it the best place to get bass and bars in one place. Standing on the stage at the back of DMZ at Base is also no joke. *Alex Threadgold, Sound-Ink*

Plastic People has long provided London with some of the freshest music around on a great soundsystem. Rarely a week goes by when I'm not there or wishing I could be there! *Georgina Cook, photographer*

**FABRIC, LONDON** It may be filled with fucked-up London style and meatheads, but it still has impeccable lighting and sound. And when you perform there, you get a lot of money, nice hotel, free drinks, and a hot girl named J to follow you around with a walkie-talkie. *Jimmy Edgar, Warp artist*

## Best music trends

- Hyphy.** *Kid Kameleon, XLR8R writer*
- Guitar music, of course.** *Fat Jon, Five Deez*
- Baile funk.** *Andi Brandenburg, Besos Not Bombs*
- The rise of DJ MP3 mixes.** *Cameron Macdonald, XLR8R writer*
- New goth and grindie.** *Jamie Reynolds, Klaxons*

## Most music trends

- Nerdcore.** *Steve Marchese, scissorkick.com*
- Indie rock bands with the same haircut.** *Jason Forrest, Cock Rock Disco*
- The hipsterization of black metal and drone.** *Justin Kay, Industrial-Organic*
- The remix album.** *Steve Martin, Nasty Little Man PR*
- Every band trying to sound like Bloc Party.** *Princess Superstar, !K7*

## Most Anticipated Albums of 2007

- Simian Mobile Disco**
- Radiohead**
- MF Doom & Ghostface**
- Interpol**
- The Loving Hand**
- Ei-P**
- Tracy Thorne**
- The Postal Service**
- !!!**
- Iggy and The Stooges**

# Top 10

## THE BEST ARTISTS & EXHIBITIONS OF 2006 By Marsea Goldberg of L.A.'s New Image Art Gallery

**1. TAUBA AUERBACH** Neo-minimalist perfectionism morphed with elegance, S.F. roots, and an innovative, conceptual grace; Auerbach moved art back to the '70s while accelerating the time machine to the future and beyond. Her show at New Image got accolades not many ever live to receive; encores at S.F.'s Luggage Store (with Espo) and NYC's Deitch Projects proved she does not rest on her laurels.

**2. NECK FACE** If you're not looking at it, you're walking in it or skating on it! He breathed life into too-serious visions on the urban streets. Did he sell his soul to the devil to have such a dream art career? No way, he is just fucking amazingly talented, hardworking, and funnier than anyone.

**3. BANKSY** For the hype, and for making as much money as a B-actor does in three days in L.A. It's about time living artists started making real money again. Believe the hype.

**4. SKULLPHONE** For not only picking the best spots in L.A., the most spots in N.Y., and the worst spots in S.F., but also turning flowers into street art, unannounced and for the sake of art.

**5. NIKKI S. LEE** She made New Yorkers insane over not being able to get into her movie at MoMA. We tried walking in backwards while the guy was taking tickets and got caught, so we lied and got in.

**6. KEEGAN MCHARGUE AT METRO PICTURES** Refreshingly colorful and inventive painting, with an honest and amazing use of space and contrast. I was so happy to see color after the last few monotone exhibitions of his work. Made me think of Matisse without the corny [parts], yet beyond—and his own.

**7. DAVID HOCKNEY** The freshest Californian (via England) master painter out there. His exhibition at L.A.C.M.A—especially the early works and major paintings—moved me, and Ed and Deanna Templeton, too. One of those shows you have to walk through a few more times backwards because you know you will never see it the same way ever again.

**8. ECSTASY SHOW AT MOCA** Excellent and brave—the most original and innovative MOCA curation since the *Helter Skelter* show. Carston Höller's "Upside Down Mushroom Room" and Fred Tomaselli's pill paintings were highlights. Truly amazing and to-the-point—ecstasy!

**9. DEVENDRA BANHART** Rocked out with his killer album *Cripple Creek*, inspiring thousands of listeners to grow their hair. Gave community true meaning by sharing everything. Put concerts together locally in Silverlake while blowing minds internationally. Made the cover of *Modern Painters*. Makes amazingly original, intricate, organic drawings, while being a living art piece himself.

**10. RICHARD COLEMAN AND CAMILLE ROSE GARCIA** These two are creating rich, passionate, innovative, cohesive expressions in adjoining studios in downtown L.A. I had the pleasure of going there and seeing two great artists paint dreams from their souls.

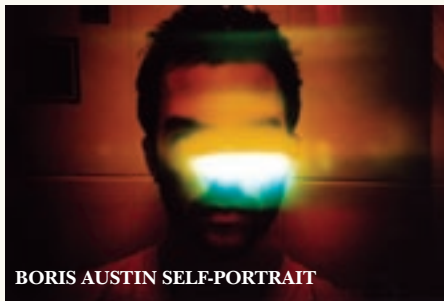
# Best visual artists



BANKSY'S BARELY LEGAL SHOW



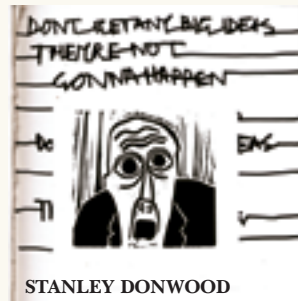
BANKSY



BORIS AUSTIN SELF-PORTRAIT



BEN DRURY



STANLEY DONWOOD

**BANKSY** For those detractors who were put off by the hype (don't worry, we know you've been into him for five years) ponder this: He had a painting which sold for \$250,000 that said "I can't believe you morons actually buy this shit." That takes irony to a level not possible on the street and validates the gallery context in my book. Hipsters, note: Expect your heroes to evolve. *Nick Philip, Imaginary Foundation*

He did a miraculous thing by keeping guerrilla art surprising, beyond clever, and, most importantly, by making a complete statement. *Kathryn Frazier, Biz3 Publicity*

*Barely Legal* was the best show of the year, and I don't feel like arguing about it with people who missed the irony. *Justin Maxwell, Volsoc/Palette Recordings*

He could have come out on top for any of the past three years, but for sticking it to Paris Hilton, Banksy owned '06 without a doubt. *Josiah Hughes, XLR8R writer*

This crazy bastard has a video on his site where you can watch him walk into the Brooklyn Museum and hang his picture on the wall. Nobody noticed for fucking weeks. *Derek Morris, Trophy Graphics*

**STANLEY DONWOOD** His *London Views* is a stunning medievalized and apocalyptic panorama of London that would eventually be used as sleeve artwork for Thom Yorke's *The Eraser*. It shows the capital's landmarks (such as the NatWest Tower and Big Ben) engulfed in waves. That Donwood credited his website ([www.slowlydownward.com](http://www.slowlydownward.com)) to the Department of Reclusive Paranoia seemed apposite. *David Hemingway, XLR8R writer*

**BEN DRURY** Homeboy gets overlooked because of all the flashy designers out there, but between his Stockholm exhibition inspired by pirate radio, its related Nike pack, and his work for Wiley, Newham Generals, and a shout on the Lupe Fiasco record, he's killing them right now. *Stephen Christian, Warp Records*

**MATTHEW BARNEY** Despite 20-odd years in the game, Barney's *Drawing Restraint* series at the SFMoMA proved he's still one of art's major players. Scaling gallery walls in Douglas MacArthur garb can only force one to shift perspective on man as an upright-standing creature. *Drawing Restraint* proves we're hardly the vertebrates we think we are. *Ken Taylor, XLR8R Managing Editor*

**BRIAN JUNGEN** His show at Musée D'Art Contemporain de Montréal was major. The masks made with Nike shoes were awesome, and the whale skeletons made with plastic chairs were just unbelievable. *Ghislain Poirier, Bounce Le Gros/Chocolate Industries*

**FRIENDS WITH YOU** From plush and wooden toys to fine-art gallery shows, these two Florida artists are making work we love, but only they fully understand. *Dustin Hosteller (UPS), Faesthetic*

**BORIS AUSTIN** This London-based documentary photographer has been shooting some of the most interesting and well-produced portraits and event photography around. Working for the likes of Hospital Records and *Knowledge* magazine, his energy and passion for photography is dizzying. *Georgina Cook, photographer*

# Best style trends

**NEON COLORS** I think when they tried to be big in the early '90s, they didn't do it right. Combine bold neon colors with minimalism and now you're on to something! *Jimmy Edgar, Warp Records*

**SKINNY JEANS** Easier than scouring thrift stores for the right vintage fit, skinny jeans have popped up everywhere. Even your mom is wearing them, but who cares? Looking good has never been this easy. *Josiah Hughes, XLR8R writer*

**KINDERGARDEN CHIC** It's not exactly new, and it might be the latest manifestation of '80s fashion revivalism, but you gotta love scensters rockin' Lee jeans, horizontally striped polo shirts, Ray-Ban sunglasses, and Keds sneakers. I especially love the girls in denim jumpers that call to mind Osh Kosh B'Gosh. *Leslie Hermelin, Mute*

**SUNGLASSES ON WOMEN** *Mathias Modica, Munk/Gomma*

# worst style trends

**ALL-OVER-PRINT STREETWEAR** Yeah, I know, I know. It's the hottest shit in *streetwear*, but let's be really real for a minute: The all-over pattern look is the post-millennial version of Generra Hypercolor. *Ross Hogg, XLR8R writer*

The T.H.T.H. hat and all-over print anything is the worst. You look like giant infants. *Justin Kay, Industrial-Organic*

There emerged a new breed of male this year, notable for their pajama tops—I mean, all-over-print hoodies—and plastic day-glo pastel sneakers. They enjoy standing in line for four days for the privilege of spending \$350 on a pair of wack AF1 knock-offs and sweating each other's limited-edition handkerchiefs. *Bret Pittman, UARM*

Please stop the onslaught. Enough is enough. What's next? Polka dots galore? *Emmet Keane, Answer*

I can't even wear my A Bathing Ape zip-up anymore because "Benj" from Good Charlotte has the same one and him and Steve Aoki wear theirs at the same time on Tuesday. Damn Los Angeles nights... *Subtitled, Alpha Pup/GSL*

**BEARDS AND IRONY** I'm not sure if these are the same thing. I can't tell anymore. I like the idea of saying 'Fuck you' to high fashion, but that doesn't necessarily justify looking like an abusive dad. *Andy Dixon, Ache Records*

**MOCCASINS** Ladies will have to learn to pick up their feet once again. *Fat Jon, Five Deez*

**BANDANNAS** Bandannas around the neck for 2006 were 2005's sweatbands. I mean, c'mon, you're not *really* an outlaw. *Celeste Tabora, Solid PR*

**HIGH-WAISTED JEANS** I am sorry, but wearing pants that have you looking like a homeless 60-year-old woman at a bus stop talking to herself is not even vaguely attractive, and you can't play the irony card, either. What, it's ironic that you spent hundreds of dollars to look like your grandmother? Actually, maybe it is... *Caural, Mush Records*

**"RAVE IS BACK"** New rave? Whatever happened to rave, keep it rave (insert smiley face here). *Tim Everist, Schwipe*

**AFGHAN KEFIA SCARVES** I hate those fucking things more than anything. Also those multi-colored Fresh Prince rip-off hats that were coming out of NYC's Nolita/Broadway Ave. that you see every dickwad wearing. Even when I went to Europe, I saw dudes from NYC wearing both there. I couldn't escape it. *Patrick Rood, Dirty Down DJ/promoter*

**CROCS** In the history of modern footwear, never has an item so repulsive come to such international acclaim. From Jared Leto to your Ben Harper-loving coworker, everyone wants to put their feet in these holey pieces of rubber. *Josiah Hughes, XLR8R writer*

**TRACK BIKES** Hipsters and their brake-less bikes. Don't judge me 'cause I use brakes and don't have tattoos. *David Ma, XLR8R writer*

## THE TOP 5 CLOTHING LINES

**1. A.P.C.** They're kind of perfect. Which is kind of scary. *Stephen Christian, Warp Records*

**2. PERKS AND MINI.** Now if only I could find more places that carry them. *Justin Montag, iTunes*

**3. CROOKS & CASTLES.** Crazy color, excellent designs, and a perfect amount of trendiness. *Dustin Hosteller (UPS), Faesthetic*

**4. HIT & RUN.** Live screenprinting is the bomb. *Nate Nelson, Stones Throw*

**5. MISHKA.** All-over prints of animal threesomes and severed fingers? Woah. *Vivian Host, XLR8R editor*



## THE TOP 10 WORST FASHION MOMENTS OF 2006 By Claw Money

**1. HUGE BEAD NECKLACES** Save the balls for bowling, bitches...

**2. ALL-OVER PRINTS WITH WEAPONS (KNIVES, GUNS, BRASS KNUCKLES)** Stop the violence!

**3. MARC JACOBS COCOON COLLECTION** Marc, we're fat enough...

**4. FAKE FASHION GANGS/CREWS/CLIQUEs** Crews that shop together, drop together! Write graffiti or join a baseball league if you need crew/teammates.

**5. WAITING IN A LINE TO BUY SNEAKERS** Make your own style—stop following corporate shoe schedules.

**6. MORE RAPPER CLOTHING BRANDS** Record-industry money ruined the industry already. Just fucking rap, okay?

**7. ED HARDY** The new Von Dutch

**8. ADIDAS ADICOLOR COMEBACK** Could've been so good, but somehow missed.

**9. BIG '70S SUNGLASSES APPROPRIATED BY THE HOLLYWOOD SET** Just be skinny and rich! Leave the flavor glasses to the cool girls.

**10. WORSHIPPING BRANDS** C'mon kids, it's just gear. Wear it then tear it.

*Bombshell: The Life and Crimes of Claw Money (Powerhouse) will be out January 31. [www.clawmoney.com](http://www.clawmoney.com)*



## MY BEST MOMENTS OF 2006 By John Trippe

**1. WATCHING 32 HOURS OF LOST STRAIGHT ON DVD** It's like watching a good movie that never ends. Torture. Now I hate the show and wish they'd all just die!

**2. DISCOVERING ALL-GIRL LONDON-BASED BAND ELECTRELANE** It charges me up so. I've never listened to a group of albums so many times. Can't wait to see them live. Fucking brilliant!

**3. FECAL FACE'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNET SHOWS AT S.F.'S 111 MINNA AND L.A.'S BLK/MRKT GALLERY** Best shows we've held thus far. Can't wait to take it to NYC and across the ocean! Tits!

**4. THE WORLD CUP** The best was rooting for your team at 8 a.m. PST, hungover in a crowded bar with a pint in your hand. USA? No. England? No. Italy? YES.

**5. THIS YEAR'S WAR ON TERROR WAS WAY BETTER THAN LAST YEAR'S!**

**6. BEING ONE OF THE JUDGES FOR THE AIR GUITAR CHAMPIONSHIPS.** The air guitaring was funny and all, but I liked all the free drinks we judges got even better.

**7. MY BUDDY JEREMY FISH** He traveled the world, designed a Nike shoe, put on a Silly Pink Bunnies convention, put out a book with Aesop Rock, and directed a short movie for Element Skateboards. The guy did more in 2006 than most people do in a lifetime.

**8. ART SHOWS IN S.F.** I really liked Fifty24SF Gallery's Kami and Sasu show and *Hamburger Eyes* had a great show at 49 Geary in September. And Mike Brodie (The Polaroid Kid) was a new photographer I got stoked on this year.

**9. THE NEW FECAL FACE** I'm still working out the kinks but it's way better than last year's. Our new calendar, which includes art listings for a bunch of cities (not just S.F., L.A., and NYC), has been a big deal.

**10. SEEING BUSH KICKED OUT OF OFFICE FOR HIS HORRIBLE MISMANAGEMENT OF OUR COUNTRY WAS PRETTY AWESOME...**

Oh, wait... Maybe next year?

John Trippe runs art and culture web portal *Fecal Face*. [www.fecalface.com](http://www.fecalface.com)

## Best music gear



**SERATO SCRATCH LIVE** Hands down, Serato Scratch Live is running things. There's nothing like playing your own remix for a dancefloor the night you make it. Now if only every club were to install a Rane TT57 (their mixer with Serato built in)... *Ross Hogg, XLR8R writer*

It's simple and works great. I've been waiting for something other than Final Scratch... Plus, Serato's other software is some of the best quality-sounding programs I've ever used. *Jimmy Edgar, Warp Records*

Serato still murders all competition. *Mats Karlsson, Raw Fusion*

Rane got it right. No bugs, easy to use, sounds great, fits in your pocket (almost). Never go back. *Kid Kameleon, XLR8R writer*



**ABLETON LIVE 6** It makes it so easy to really play live (keeping it flexible with the ability for improvisation), and to use one's laptop as an instrument, not just a playback device. They keep pushing the features closer and closer to this idea of not just bridging a gap between studio and live, but making live something completely different than the studio. Who needs a guitar? Laptops are the new turntable. *Ezekiel Honig, Microcosm Music*

Honestly, I don't know a musician who *doesn't* use it and, what's more, almost every musician I know uses it differently. Its malleable interface allows you to pretty much do whatever you want. And, no, I don't work for them. *Jason Forrest, Cock Rock Disco*

You could have just said [version] 5 and it would have been all good, but 6 is off the hook for the splash screen alone! *Subtitle, Alpha Pup/GSL*

## Best media items



**THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP** I loved this film. Michel Gondry's technique seems so DIY, it really inspires the audience. I came out of that film wanting to be filmmaker. How about that fucking cardboard car!? *Andy Dixon, Ache Records*

**LOST: SEASON 2 DVD** I hated on *Lost* before I ever saw it just because everybody said how much they liked it. Then I got hooked. Now everybody says how much they hate it and how the second season was lame and I like it even better. *Stephen Christian, Warp Records*

**YOUTUBE.COM** The Smiths live at the Hacienda? Footage of Japanese hardcore bands? Old D.A.F. concerts? Classic Altern-8 videos, grime DVD footage, and the Chicken Noodle Soup dance? I have never felt so fulfilled wasting hours on the internet. *Vivian Host, XLR8R editor*

All you have to do is type in "grandma & airbag" and you will agree. *Derek Morris, Trophy Graphics*

**MYSPACE.COM** Since MySpace, I don't play with *The Sims* anymore. Wink, wink. *Gudrun Gut, Monika Enterprise*

## Best videogames



**THE WARRIORS** I never met El-P, yet I can beat his ass anytime I want! Thanks, Rockstar! *Geoffrey Wilson, Consumer's Research & Development*

**WE LOVE KATAMARI** Not just a game, but art! And now the guy who designed it has decided to make children's playgrounds. Amazing. *Mathhead, Trouble & Bass*

**NBA2K7** Yes, it's a basketball game, but it features some of the best work Dan the Automator has done since the first HBMS album. Buy the game or grab the uncensored tracks off of the interweb. *Chris Baker, Wired Associate Editor*

**FIFA 2006** Yes, I play videogames, but only this one... *Bret Pittman, UARM*



**THE COLBERT REPORT** Straddling the fence between surreal simulation and earnest egotism, Stephen Colbert's postmodern mash-up of news, comedy, and satire is more addictive than heroin, and it's better for you. Subversion has never succeeded with such hilarity. *Scott Thill, XLR8R writer*

**LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE** This movie was fantastic on so many levels that it's hard to limit a review to just a couple sentences. Even its simplest moments—like the malfunctioning car horn during the traffic stop—had me laughing so hard I couldn't breathe. *Cawal, Mush Records*

**GUITAR HERO** Granted, this is coming from a girl whose last videogame console maxed out at *Contra*, but few other games can get the most jaded of your hipster friends up and rocking to White Zombie. Now if only they could devise some clever hybrid with *DDR*... *Connie Hwang, Flavorpill*

**BRAIN AGE** This brain-exercising game for Nintendo DS informed me that I had an 80-year-old's mind after I named colors out loud and did simple math problems. Games that criticize you more than entertain, that's art. *Cameron Macdonald, XLR8R writer*

**BAED** The Big Ass Emulator Disc for the hacked Xbox still puts every new game to shame. C'mon! Every single NES, SNES, Sega, Turbo Grafx, Atari, Intellivision, and Coleco game on one fucking DVD? *Ken Taylor, XLR8R managing editor*



**TONI RUBIO 12\"/>**

**THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON DVD** An extremely fascinating look into the life of a demented genius that I had written off until we saw this film. Whether or not you enjoy his music, it's interesting to see how his obsessive self-documentation of his life and art affected the movie. It's rare to see a biography/documentary with such copious amounts of authentic footage. *Dustin Hosteller (UPSO), Faesthetic*

## TOP 10 ELECTRONIC GADGETS YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

1. My rabbit pearl vibrator. *Princess Superstar, !K7*
2. My video iPod. *David Ma, XLR8R writer*
3. My Walkman. *Matthew Schnipper, XLR8R writer*
4. The Apple iBook. *Tim Everist, Schwipe*
5. [Korg] Kaoss Pad 1. *Jan-Simon Spielberger, Tolcha*
6. My pacemaker. *Mike Robinson, Annals*
7. The Treo 700. *Betty Kang, Plexi PR*
8. The [Boss] RPS-10 [pitch shifter]. *Jamie Reynolds, Klaxons*
9. Noise-canceling headphones. *Cheryl Taruc, Flavorpill contributing editor*
10. Any of the Nokia N-Series. *Fat Jon, Five Deez*



## TOP 10 2006 HEADLINES THAT RUPERT MURDOCH REFUSED TO PRINT By Marc Maron

1. Dick Cheney Shoots Self by Accident: "I Thought I Was a Bird," Says Veep
2. Bush's Old Coke Dealer Writes Book. Whitehouse Response: "I Thought My Dad Had Him Whacked"
3. Jeff Gannon/Karl Rove Sex Video Most Downloaded Clip in History
4. The Total Withdrawal of Troops From Iraq
5. Bin Laden Killed: Found to Have Freezer Burn
6. Complete Plans for 9/11 Attacks Found in Dick Cheney's Tackle Box
7. India Outsources Jobs to US
8. Millions of People Hit The Streets in Outrage Over Clearly Rigged Midterm Elections
9. Tom DeLay Sentenced to Hard Time; Within Hours of Incarceration Becomes a Popular Bitch
10. Cheney Snaps and Shoots Bush and Rumsfeld, Declares Himself King of the World, Holds Condi Rice Hostage in the Oval Office for Hours Trying to Rape Her and Has Several Heart Attacks in the Process, Then Shoots Himself Out of Impotent Shame and Rage. Denny Hastert Becomes President.

Marc Maron is a comedian, writer, and former Air America DJ who likes to use phrases like "Neo-con death cult!" [www.marcmaron.com](http://www.marcmaron.com)



Border Community boldly traverses the barbed-wire boundaries between techno, prog-house, and beyond.

WORDS: DAVID HEMINGWAY  
ILLUSTRATION & TYPE: SPARKY HARDISTY  
BACKGROUND PHOTOS: KIMBERLEE WHALEY

Perhaps no label in 2006 more distinctly reflected the fluidity of musical tags and genres than James Holden's Border Community. The nascent imprint is all things to all people. It's a techno label, an electro-house label, a psychedelic prog-house label, an indie label, and it even stands a chance of reclaiming the much-maligned T-word (ahem, "trance") back from the likes of Paul Van Dyk and Oakenfold. While the label remains devoted to the dancefloor, the atmospheric, textural quality of its releases frequently draws comparisons to acts like M83, Boards of Canada, and even My Bloody Valentine.

The label itself is "about dance music that doesn't fit into a category," says Holden, who happily extols the virtues of "epic stuff, sad songs, and weird noises." Tellingly, his *At The Controls* mix CD places Richie Hawtin's Plastikman project alongside Krautrock supergroup Harmonia, techno-industrial sounds from Black Strobe next to sound sculpture from Fennesz, and even includes music from two Arab Strap splinter projects (Lucky Pierre and Malcolm Middleton). Though released on the Resist label, *At The Controls* is best taken as a statement of intent for Border Community; its blurring of styles reflects Holden's own music-making history: he's recorded for house label Loaded and been fêted by trance "legend" Tiesto; he's remixed artists as disparate as Britney Spears, Andre Kraml, Depeche Mode, and Madonna, and his tracks have been featured in DJ sets from Ferry Corsten, Damian Lazarus, John Digweed, and Dominik Eulberg.

#### COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Holden, a former mathematics major, set a distinct blueprint for Border Community with his July 2003 debut "A Break in the Clouds." The single reached a delectable mid-point

“We still like music  
AND  
We still like dancing.”

JAMES HOLDEN



jake fairley



nathan fake

between main-room delirium and bedroom melancholia, with accompanying “Beats Tool” and “Ambient” versions accentuating each of these polar opposites, respectively.

Since then, Holden has nurtured wide-eyed, pastoral techno from a self-professed “country bumpkin” (Nathan Fake), released tech-house from two German psy-trance producers (Extrawelt), and licensed a release to Kompakt (The MFA’s soaring “What a Difference It Makes”). He’s released lovely Scottish atmospherica that carries traces of early-’90s shoegaze rock (Dextro), put out awesome Sasha-approved Swedish prog-house (Petter), and provided a welcome mat for the “sensitive” side of Canadian techno-meister Jake Fairley (Fairmont).

Holden says he founded Border Community to allow himself and his friends to circumvent “the bad parts of the music industry,” giving all parties the opportunity to be “free and honest” in the music they make.

“For me, it’s an annex away from the coke-addled self interest of much of the music industry,” concurs collaborator Scott Edwards, who records as Avus. “The whole feeling about the label is [that it’s] a comfort blanket. Having had my fair share of industry crap to put up with, it’s a good place to be.”

For the label’s coterie of music-makers, the emphasis seems to be on the community part of the moniker, with Holden—a “nice bloke” (Avus’ words) and “great guy” (says Jake Fairley)—at its nucleus. Extrawelt even compares their label boss to a particularly considerate pet owner. “We heard that they were looking for some German pets,” deadpans the duo of Arne Schaffhausen and Wayan Raabe. “What does a new home mean to a pet? It was love from the beginning.”

#### HEARTS ON SLEEVES

Even the label’s art reflects this collective ethos. For each release, starting with Lazy Fat People’s April 2006 single “Big City,” Border Community has started running a “coloring competition,” inviting fans to dig out their Crayolas (or computer pen tools) and re-work the label’s stock image of rolling hills and fluffy clouds. Winners are picked by BC artists, and their visions adorn future record sleeves.

“The label’s identity isn’t this constant, unchangeable thing,” explains Holden. “It can be reflected in a million ways. I love the idea of it being open and inclusive. The way people enter the competition is a totally different spirit from the ‘job’ of making a cover. It isn’t product and branding.”

The sleeve for Holden’s album debut, *The Idiots Are Winning*, is a painting by contest-winner Gregory Dourde. “I felt such a big gap between the minimalist design identity of Border Community and the complex sounds I heard,” Dourde writes on the Border Community website, explaining his maximalist, paint-splattered image. “I wanted to paint something de-structured, exuberant, and instinctive!”

“It’s a genuine artistic response to the music,” says Holden. “And we’re lucky to have that.”

#### PARTY OUT OF BOUNDS

Holden has implied that Border Community represents a “year zero” for himself and his music. “Border Community was the point where I started to make music freely,” he clarifies. “I think I became uncomfortable with the box that I’d been put in and hated all the music that I was lumped in with. Looking back, I still like my old tunes. You can still trace the line through my musical evolution so I can’t really feel uncomfortable with it. Lesson learnt, anyway.”

The label seems born of a similarly curious mixture of optimism and pessimism—with Holden simultaneously enthralled by the potential of electronic music but utterly disillusioned with the conservatism of contemporary dance music.

“I think a while ago, I was full of hope,” he admits. “Around the start of Border Community, I was discovering a lot of people who were similarly free-spirited and had a feeling that a new wave of ‘music to dance to’ had arrived; it was like we’d backed out of dance music’s wrong turn and nothing was going to be the same anymore. Now it feels like back to business as usual. All the inventiveness has been smothered by insincere bandwagon-humper plagiarism... But we carry on anyway. We still like music and we still like dancing.”

Neatly, Border Community rounds off the year with Holden’s Aphex-y *The Idiots Are Winning* LP; an attempt, he says, to make electronic music in a more human way. He refuses to talk about the title but such ambiguity is fitting, the meaning as unclear and indefinite as the boundaries of the music Border Community brings to the world.

James Holden’s *The Idiots Are Winning* is out December 4 on Border Community.  
[www.bordercommunity.com](http://www.bordercommunity.com), [www.jamesholden.org](http://www.jamesholden.org)

# plus Device

PUNCTURE

“Serious electro-funk for the Egyptian Lover / vocoder lover in all of us. Hot.” - XLR8R



Also Available Body Heat EP

HEFTYRECORDS.COM

HEFTY!RECORDS



# Extended Moulton

Nu-disco princes Rub-N-Tug meet  
12-inch pioneer Tom Moulton downtown.

WORDS: FRED MIKETA PHOTOS: RAYON RICHARDS  
TYPE & ILLUSTRATION: SPARKY HARDISTY

In the '60s and '70s, if you had the phrase "A Tom Moulton Mix" tagged to your record, you probably had a hit. The former record-promotions-man-turned-studio-engineer took classic funk, soul, and R&B artists to new heights with his patented brand of mixing. But when disco came around, Moulton blew everyone out of the water by literally inventing the 12-inch single—because his mastering studio was out of blank sevens. Since then, he's been a sought-after producer, arranger, and engineer, and Soul Jazz recently commemorated his legacy with *A Tom Moulton Mix*, a two-disc set compiling some of his greatest hits by the likes of Grace Jones, Eddie Kendricks, and more.

In the '00s, if you haven't been to one of Rub-N-Tug's NYC happenings, you haven't really partied. Over the past decade, the producer/DJ duo of Thomas Bullock and Eric Duncan has breathed new life into the city's club scene, mashing together disco, rock, soul, and everything in between for an innovative take on the Loft-lovin' lifestyle. We gathered them all for a look at the disco lifestyle, new and old.

**Thomas Bullock: Tom, what do you consider to be the first clubs that were getting the disco sound together, when they were really still, like, playing 45s?**

Tom Moulton: You had Le Jardin, you had Hollywood, 12 West, Sanctuary. There were a lot of clubs. And when I say a lot, I think, like, 15, 16 clubs was a lot.

**Eric Duncan: Were all 15 worth going to? Like, now there's 500 clubs and only three worth going to.**

TM: That's true, because you don't have leaders anymore. People say, "You always wanna make things easier for a DJ," but yet, when you give them beats in the beginning and outro, you take away the creativity of how to mix or play a record. You could be the Muzak DJ, for God's sake. And I think that's why all the filtering and different effects are coming into play, because otherwise, what makes you different

than any other DJ? In the old days, if you liked the record, even if it didn't have an intro, you found a way to play it.

**TB: That's how me and Eric do it... We play rock, soul, and disco, and take the tempo up and down for eight to 10 hours.**

TM: I think in the old days, if somebody found a record, they would put a white label on top of it so that nobody else could find out what they were playing.

TB: Funny you should say that [*laughs*]... Eric reintroduced that style. Me and Eric are quite like that with certain records. People miss them, and we sort of introduce them... but you can't tell them [what the record is] because of the internet. There's no challenge anymore; any person can come up with a pen and paper and they've got your record collection with the touch of a button. We actually have these things we call "knowledge protectors." They're like these heavy stabilizers that we put on the record.

**ED: So you still work in the studio, right Tom?**

TM: Well, I do everything at home now. I kinda retired back in the '80s. [Loleatta Hathaway's] "Love Sensation" was the last thing I did. When so many people wanted to do disco, I thought, "Oh my God, I can't deal with this any more." I work more now than I've ever done before, but my tastes vary so much. I'm mixing probably all the songs on the Brand New Heavies [disc] again.

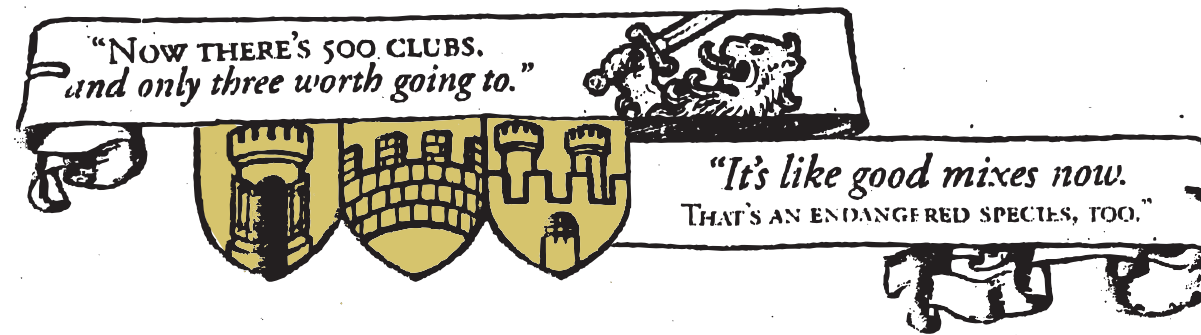
**ED: The new way now, though, right? Like on computers?**

TM: The stuff was all recorded in the studio, but I'm doing it all on Pro Tools. I like it because I can have, like, 600 different studios going at the same time. I have so many hard drives here, it's a joke... but it's fun. I'm doing a lot of work for [Kenny] Gamble again now. We're gonna do the Johnny Williams album that never came





Thomas Bullock waves hello with the help of Rub-N-Tug partner Eric Duncan.



out, so I'm thrilled about that. And I'm gonna do a *Philadelphia Classics* too, which will be great, too, for me, because I love that period of music.

**TB: Do you hear many of the new records being made at the moment, like the new dance 12s?**

TM: You know who I like? I don't know if they're considered new school, but it's the Shakeshifters. But you have to remember something. I still come from being a promotion man, basically, and I still gravitate towards commercial [records], things that have a mass appeal, as opposed to just turning out a couple DJs. Like, when I first heard [Robin S'] "Show Me Love" I went nuts over that, and a lot of other people did too. I love those commercial kinds of things that just *get* everybody.

**TB: I love that record!**

TM: When I walked into Vinyl Mania and first heard it I said, "Whatever that is, I want it!" But see, that's the thing I love about music—what I call the power of music. It absolutely rattles your bones, and that's the reason I'm in this business.

**TB: It's just a great pop tune, innit?**

TM: And of course when "Keep on Movin'" came out...

**TB: Soul II Soul?**

TM: When I heard that, I said, "That's a New York record!" That's the epitome of what I call the New York style. Everybody said, "It's so slow." And I said, "Yeah, well, you wait 'til that soul creeps into you. Then you'll see how slow it is."

**TB: Tom, did you have a hand in making the first-ever 12-inch dance record?**

TM: Sure did [laughs]. I always went over to Media Sound. See, every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, I had Studio A at Sigma Sound booked, a year at a time, because I worked four nights a week down there. I used to go down there Monday afternoon and I'd come back early Friday morning, and I'd go back to Media Sound. And I would work on Gloria Gaynor or Melba Moore or somebody there Friday night, but during that afternoon, I'd always master the records. They ran out of seven-inch blanks and I said, "I gotta do this song. What am I gonna do?" "Well, we got 12-inch blanks." And I go, "Okay, well, I just need four of them." And they cut them in spec, and I go, "What is this? Can you, like, spread the grooves or something so that it's at least covering more of the surface?" "We'll have to make it hotter."

So I said, "Okay, what the hell." Well, when I heard the sound, I went, "Oh my lord!" But it was an accident.

**TB: When you did dance mixes, back in the day, would you duplicate the tape and then splice it?**

TM: I'd never alter the original multi-track. I had it all mapped out in my brain. I'd listen to the multi-track and I'd always listen to the rhythm part of it, where they cut the rhythm section. At least with Philadelphia, you'd have the rhythm section, which you'd cut first... So I'd listen to get the nucleus of the song, but I'd do it in pieces and then edit it all together.

**ED: What were your favorite records that you made, Tom?**

TM: Well, anything by The Trammps, naturally. They were my favorite group. And I guess mainly the Philadelphia stuff, because I felt like I was part of the family there. That spoiled me for everybody else, because I work on a lot of Motown stuff now, and it just doesn't have the same quality as the Philadelphia stuff does... I got spoiled by Sigma, because there were just certain things they would not allow. If there was a mistake, you corrected it.

**TB: We have a friend in London who has the actual Sigma Sound monitors, the Tannoys.**

TM: I always scratch the "T" off [laughs]... because they were always tubby-sounding. You think you're getting all this great bass, and you take it out of there, and you go "What happened to it?" But there's something about having something from *the day*, because it's not only mystifying, it's sort of inspiring...

**TB: What kind of monitors do you use now?**

TM: I use these little, inexpensive Genelecs [laughs]. No, I like the low-end, and the [Yamaha] NS10s, which are called "the reality speaker."

**TB: I've got the NS10Ms.**

TM: All the studios had those, because if you can make something sound good on those Yamahas, then you had something that was good anywhere. They don't make them anymore. They can't get that wood anymore. It's an endangered species now... It's like good mixes now. That's an endangered species, too, now that I think about it.

*A Tom Moulton Mix (Soul Jazz) and Fabric30: Rub-N-Tug (Fabric) are out now.*

[www.souljazzrecords.co.uk](http://www.souljazzrecords.co.uk), [www.fabriclondon.com](http://www.fabriclondon.com)

For audio outtakes of this interview, check out the downloads section of [xlr8r.com](http://xlr8r.com).

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Though it goes against the commonly known fact that "Tom Moulton never phones it in," the legendary mixer agreed to pose with a phone. Thanks, Tom, we owe you one.



Greenskeepers: Coban Rudish, Mark Share, James Curd, Nick Maurer

## character study

Greenskeepers' bassist Coban Rudish talks about his father, Rainbow Brite, and crashing the polo club.

WORDS: PATRICK SISSON ILLUSTRATION: PAUL RUDISH TYPE: SPARKY HARDISTY

House music has eccentric artists aplenty, but few can consistently turn out tracks with the twisted humor of Greenskeepers and keep a straight face. A live house outfit from Chicago, started by former golf caddies Nick Maurer and James Curd, the group delivers serious, floor-burning funk amped up with silly and endearing lyrics. They've turned *The Silence of the Lambs* psycho Buffalo Bill into a house diva (on "Lotion") and revived the career of *Fantasy Island* midget Hervé Villechaize in the music video for their song "Filipino Phil."

Now a quartet—with the inclusion of bassist Coban Rudish and guitarist/keyboardist Mark Share—Greenskeepers has just released *Polo Club* on San Francisco's OM Records. Overflowing with loony lyrics and an excellent Huey Lewis cover, it begs the question: Where do these guys come up with this stuff? *XLR8R* spoke with Rudish, who comes from a very animated and artistically inclined family, about where he gets his creative inspiration.

**XLR8R:** Tell me about your brother, who works as an animator.

**Coban Rudish:** My older brother Paul started out as a character designer on the *Batman* cartoon, then worked at Hanna-Barbera. Then he moved on to [Cartoon Network show] *Dexter's Laboratory* as a character designer and storyboarder, which led to *Powerpuff Girls*. Then he did *Clone Wars*, the *Star Wars* cartoon, and won an Emmy for it. Now he's trying





“WE TALK ABOUT STAR WARS ALL THE TIME.  
*We have our own dork support system.*”

to start his own studio in partnership with the Orphanage, a computer-effects studio that wants to do 3-D features. They already hired on Gendly Tartakovsky (who created *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Powerpuff Girls*). Paul is kind of Tartakovsky's right-hand man. And he is a dork just like me. We talk about *Star Wars* all the time and have our own dork support system.

**It seems like this creativity is a very big part of the family, since your dad Rick also drew.**

It was a big part of growing up in my household, since my dad was an artist. But his main interest was horses. While he was in veterinary school, he was caught drawing a horse by an art teacher, who then got him to switch to art school. He graduated in 1964 and was recruited by Hallmark. He was drafted to go to Vietnam before he could start, but avoided real service by doing propaganda illustrations. After he finished that, he went to work at Hallmark. Then my dad started up a little farm and raised horses. The cutesy Hallmark art was kind of his way to afford his hobby. He also judged horse shows and was actually pretty high up in the Arabian Horse Association, which is unfortunately now associated with that dumbass [Michael] Brown, [director of FEMA during Hurricane Katrina].

**Did you and Paul draw a lot with your father?**

We would sit in his studio, across his drawing table in our high chairs, and draw along. Of course, when my dad would put on a Bee Gees record, I would get distracted and dance, while Paul would keep drawing.

**How did your dad become involved with *Rainbow Brite*?**

Hallmark decided they needed a property to compete with *Strawberry Shortcake*. My dad was asked to help create the character. Of course, my dad put a horse in it. Mattel picked up licenses to do toys, and then it kicked into gear and they made a full-length movie.

**Did you get to work on the movie at all, since you were a kid at the time?**

My dad went to work for the studio that made the movie—he was the art director—so Paul and I got to go and help design characters. Our names are in the credits as character designers. I designed the wise old wizard-sprite in the movie. Paul and I got to sit in with the writers, kind of like kiddie consultants.

**Was there any notoriety to being the kid whose dad created *Rainbow Brite*?**

I definitely tried to use it to my advantage trying to get the

girls at school to have a crush on me. That's also the reason I started playing music, I'm not afraid to admit.

**How does Greenskeepers capture that sense of fun so many bands lack?**

I think it's a little more magical than that. Nick and Jim started Greenskeepers, and Nick is just a silly dude. He's just a crazy, fantastical mind. At the same time, that vibe comes naturally for all of us.

**How did you guys come up with “Lotion?”**

I think Nick came up with the idea. Mark came up with the guitar riff and Nick just started flowing with the creepiness. I personally thought the song was a joke, and lo and behold, it was the breakout hit of the record.

**Was it tough for you to adapt to playing house music?**

In my mind, it was electronic disco, in many ways. I was disappointed with the way the hip-hop stole from all these old records I had. It was like, if you like that beat, let me play you the real song by Roy Ayers, because it's even better. But James is so good at disguising, and picking and editing things.

**What inspired *Polo Club*?**

The title track was one of Nick's whims. He started singing “polo club” over and over again. We were like, “Why the hell do you want to get into the damn polo club?” We try not to be political—we usually just try to put some humor back into things—but it was a ‘Screw you’ to rich people. And once Mark re-edited it, it sounded awesome.

**It seems like a real '80s vibe is going on here with the Huey Lewis cover and the Talking Heads-style singing.**

People talk about the David Byrne stuff, but that's just what came out. We weren't thinking about it at the time. I grew up in the '80s, so when I started digging in my mind for rock riffs, that's what I looked for. We're products of where we came from, and I listened to a lot of INXS songs growing up.

Greenskeepers' *Polo Club* is out now on OM Records.  
[www.greenskeepersmusic.com](http://www.greenskeepersmusic.com), [www.om-records.com](http://www.om-records.com)





Techno maverick John Tejada on polishing sound, pushing forward, and the tenth anniversary of Palette Recordings.

WORDS: ANDY HERMANN PHOTOS: DREW REYNOLDS  
TYPE: SPARKY HARDISTY

John Tejada is searching through a copy of his latest CD, *Cleaning Sounds Is a Filthy Business*, trying to find this one track he likes to play in his DJ sets. “No, it’s not that one,” he mutters, hitting the skip button. “I always get all the titles mixed up. I’ve always been bad at my own titles.”

Finally he finds the track—which, as it turns out, has a great title: “Science, I Think.” He plays a few seconds of it; a springy bass beat and snare leading into a classic Detroit techno synth riff. It’s easy to hear why he describes this new album, his tenth, as a “big combination of nostalgic ideas” and a push “forward into new ones.”

So there’s only one song out of 10 on *Cleaning Sounds* that he likes playing as a DJ? Not really, but “there are certain ones that are easier to play,” he admits. “I’ve always been weird about my own stuff in my sets. I guess because it’s more personal... it kind of interrupts my flow.”

John Tejada is that kind of DJ—the one who’s far more concerned about the flow of his set than he is about promoting his own tracks. He’s that kind of producer, too, the rare one for whom the cliché “it’s all about the music” really applies. Ask him about the title of the new album and he’ll give you a true gearhead answer about working with “monophonic, semi-modular synths” that lack presets: “You start from wherever the knobs are at... so it’s like polishing sound.” Ask him about his band project, I’m Not a Gun (see sidebar), and he’ll talk your ear off about what an amazing musician his partner Takeshi Nishimoto is. Ask him about his parents—who divorced when he was little—and he’ll tell you proudly that Mom’s an opera singer based in Los Angeles and Dad’s a former conductor who now teaches music at a university in Vienna. As for their son’s music: Mom “gets it,” Dad “tries.” But

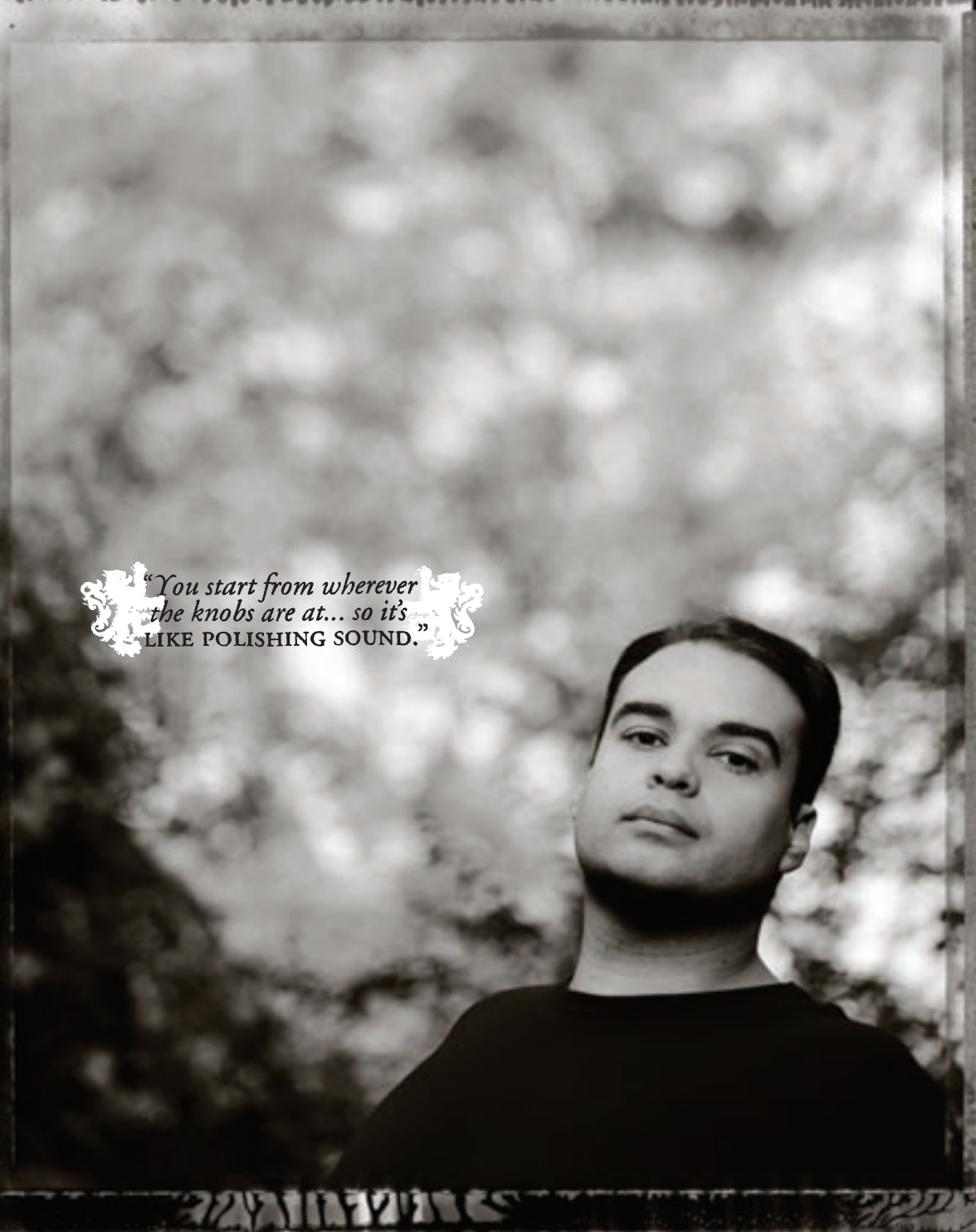
“he seems really proud,” Tejada notes.

Ironically, it’s Tejada’s father who gets to see his son treated like a celebrity. In Austria, Germany, France, and beyond, Tejada is a headline-grabber. He regularly flies to Europe—Japan, too—to play megaclubs where he gets treated, as he jokingly puts it, “like David Hasselhoff.” Then he takes off the Superman cape and returns to his Clark Kent life in Los Angeles. “I actually really appreciate my home,” he insists. “Even though [electronic music] is not that big here, people are really appreciative when they hear something good, even if they’re not totally familiar with it. Whereas overseas, people can be sort of jaded by the whole thing,” he believes, because “there’s thousands of big acts out there.”

The closest thing Tejada has to a home base in L.A. is a Friday techno and breaks night called Compression, which happens twice a month at a little Hollywood club called King King. That’s where, this month, Tejada will celebrate the tenth anniversary of Palette Recordings, the label he launched in 1996 as a place to “go with my own ideas and not be questioned.”

True to form, Tejada takes on a self-effacing tone when discussing Palette, whose fans include heavy-hitters like Sasha, Steve Bug, and Josh Wink. “I didn’t really expect it to last all that long,” he shrugs. “It took me 10 years to really concentrate on it.” You might think 42 releases in 10 years sounds pretty concentrated, but the truth is that many of Tejada’s biggest releases—including





*"You start from wherever the knobs are at... so it's like polishing sound."*

## *Turning Time*

John Tejada on his rock side project, **I'm Not a Gun.**

I'm Not a Gun started when John Tejada heard Takeshi Nishimoto playing the *sarod*—a traditional instrument similar to a sitar—at an Indian restaurant in Los Angeles. The two met afterwards and got to talking about music, and eventually agreed to get together for a few jam sessions. Three albums later, and the duo has acquired a strong international following among fans of contemporary jazz and post-rock, boasting a unique sound that echoes everything from Tortoise to Pat Metheny.

For Tejada—who plays drums, synths, and a little guitar, as well as serving as the project's producer—the real excitement of I'm Not a Gun comes from working with a musician of Nishimoto's caliber. "He's a pretty bad-ass jazz and classical session guy," Tejada says. "It's been a real challenge to capture what he's all about, because he's really amazing. My goal is to eventually get that perfect recording of how he plays."

I'm Not a Gun's latest album, *We Think as Instruments*, was released in May of this year on the German label City Centre Offices. It continues the band's evolution away from the "post-rock" tag, a label Tejada isn't entirely comfortable with. "I think it's a compliment," he says of the Tortoise and Tristeza comparisons. "But I really don't think we sound like that. I think Takeshi's style is really unique!" [www.city-centre-offices.de](http://www.city-centre-offices.de)

the biggest, his 2004 hit "Sweat (On the Walls)"—have been for other labels (Poker Flat, Plug Research, and ~scape, among them). In fact, *Cleaning Sounds* is Tejada's first solo artist album on Palette; all of his past Palette releases have been collaborations, compilations, and 12"s.

"I know I've had a history of appearing on a lot of labels," he admits, "but if Palette continues to do what it's been doing for me, I'm really planning on keeping everything on Palette."

Judging from the quality of *Cleaning Sounds*, that's good news for Tejada fans. From start to finish, it's a tightly focused set of sparse, melodic techno that recalls everything from the old-school Detroit scene to the minimalist explorations of producers like Richie Hawtin

to Tejada's own mid-'90s recordings for the British label A13. The echo of Tejada's own earlier productions is no coincidence; for this album, he put away his laptop and went back to an "all-hardware" studio, recording most of the album on "synths and drum units and effects devices." "You work with that stuff differently than you do on a computer," he says. "It just has a feel and a vibe."

Tejada is clearly looking forward to pursuing his new-found focus on Palette, and on "cutting out all the A&R people" and doing things his way. "Even if I'm wrong, I don't care. I just want to be comfortable doing what I'm doing."

*Cleaning Sounds* is a *Filthy Business* is out now on Palette. [www.palette recordings.com](http://www.palette recordings.com)

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## TURNTABLE LAB



Five artists illustrate the most memorable events of the year.

TYPE: SPARKY HARDISTY

In Order of Appearance:

**DIMAQUINA**

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
[www.dimaquina.com](http://www.dimaquina.com)

*Deja vu.* "Who's gonna rule our filthy paradise for the next four years?  
It doesn't matter, we've seen this movie before."

**NOAH BUTKUS**

New York, NY  
[www.noahbutkus.com](http://www.noahbutkus.com)

"It was almost 10 years ago that a friend of mine put two of Arthur Lee's songs with Love ("7 and 7 Is" and "Little Red Book") on the beginning of a mixtape of '60s psych and garage stuff. At the time, I was still very much listening to the hardcore music I grew up on, but this tape, with those songs, completely changed what I would listen to from that point on."

**RACHELL SUMPTER**

San Francisco, CA  
[www.rachellsumpter.com](http://www.rachellsumpter.com)

"August 2006. Pluto is demoted to dwarf status by the people of planet Earth."

**TRISTAN CEDDIA**

Melbourne, Australia  
[www.serpspress.com](http://www.serpspress.com)

"My piece is about *not* doing some cliché, quirky, Steve Irwin 'crikey' graphic, with a thumbs-up sort of crocodile vibe. I wanted to do something that still ran all the hype, but wasn't so obvious."

**DANIEL ST. GEORGE 2ND**

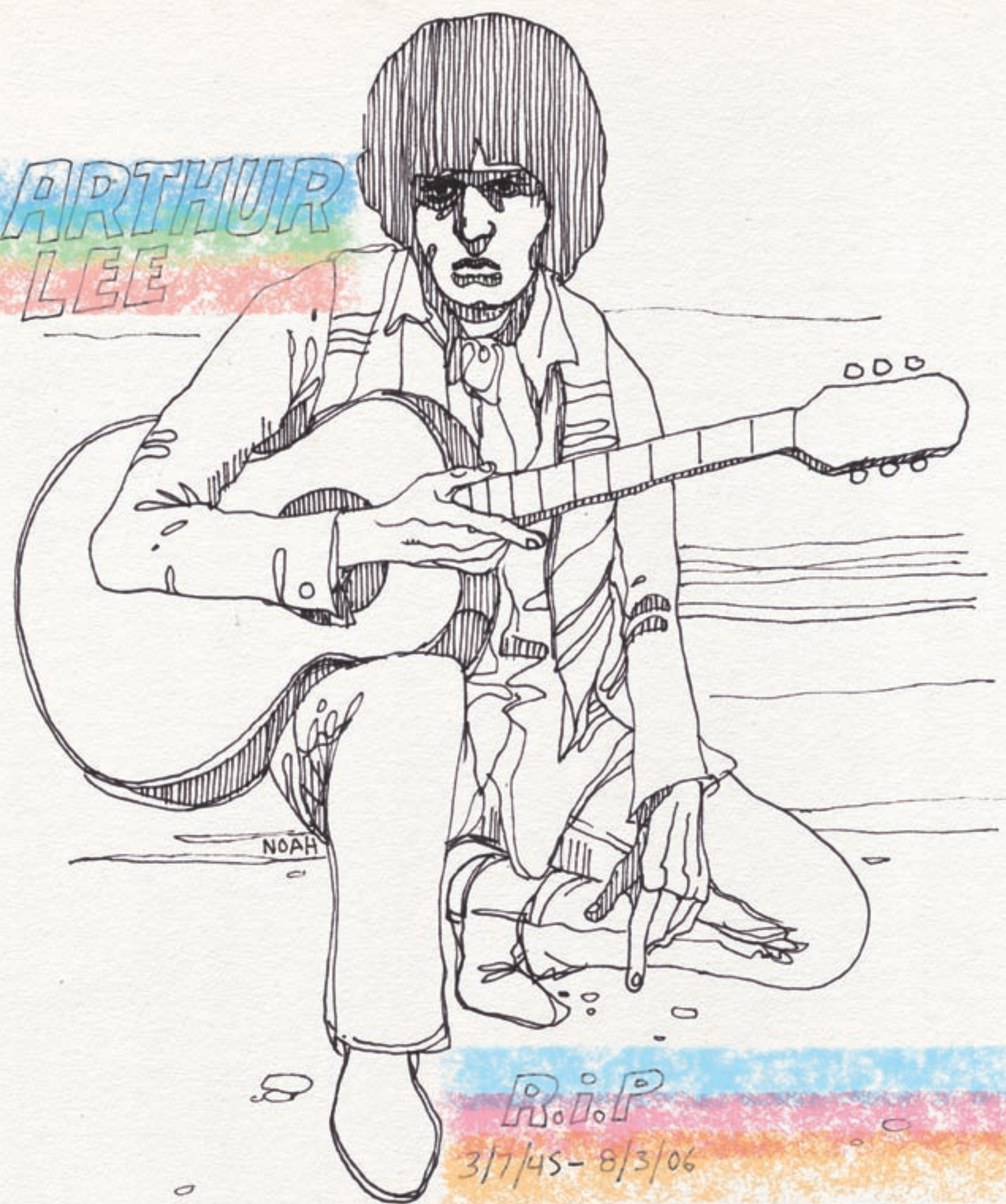
Brooklyn, NY  
[www.danielstgeorge.com](http://www.danielstgeorge.com)

"Another eventful year has passed, and all I can recall is what is going on in my own life...

Do we always relate the world events to ourselves  
and our little world within this one?"



ARTHUR  
LEE



R.I.P  
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tragedy The ray stopped and turned and that was it  
 He was the Australian that we all aspire to be. He held an absolute belief about caring for the riches of our country. - ACTOR RUSSELL CROWE

**History of deadly rays**

**Croc wrangler took on world** Too hard to believe to ignore, the news

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**GOODBYE THEIR WAY**

**Death of an Aussie leg**

**President prays for bushman**

**last croc hu**

Crikey, can he really be gone?

**Dad pays tribute**

**an 'ordinary bloke**

of death strike Tell the

**Fear the trigger**

**to stingray strike**

The croc star who outshone Dundee

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**The face of a nati**

Rare villain but deadly all the s

**True Blue send-off**

The Australian we all aspire to be' Not a dry eye in the Crocos

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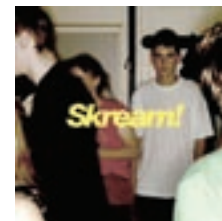
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**Kode9 & The Spaceape**

**Album  
Reviews  
12.06**



**TWO HIGHLY-ANTICIPATED FULL-LENGTHS ROUND OUT A YEAR OF DUBSTEP PRESSURE.**

**SKREAM  
SKREAM!**  
Tempa/UK/CD

**KODE9 AND THE SPACEAPE  
MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE**  
Hyperdub/UK/CD

The new beats of the request line have come thick and fast out of London over the past 18 months, and dubstep has gone from describing a sound known only to a few to a holy word meaning "power." It's fortunate that Skream's *Skream!* and Kode9 and The Spaceape's *Memories of the Future* have been released within a few weeks of each other; if you take them together, you get a summation of the sound and a lesson in just how broad, diverse, and healthy the dubstep scene is at the moment.

The rap sheet on Skream is pretty public by now: young; from Croydon; extremely prolific; author of the scene's biggest anthem, "Midnight Request Line." And maybe it's obvious, but the thing that often gets left out about Skream is that his tracks make people dance like mad. They're all remarkably simple—some of them almost DJ tools, heavy on dub but dry, in a Fruity Loops kind of way (like dubstep that would pass Daddy Yankee's muster). The album *Skream!* feels more like a compilation, but that's hardly a diss—it's full of stripped-down gems like the simple, skanking "Dutch Flowers" and the wicked bounce of "Rutten." The twin standouts are "Check-It," featuring the fiery Warrior Queen channeling Mary Wells' "My Guy," and "Tapped," with JME spitting paranoid rhymes and affirming the link that's always existed between grime and dubstep. "Midnight Request Line" is here, too, (because it couldn't *not* be), and it sounds as good as ever. The album's only stumble is the eight-minute-plus trumpet wankery of "Summer Dreams," which sounds like a bad MJ Cole knock-off (double-shame on its inclusion, considering all the great unreleased Skream material floating around).

If Skream's plug-in of choice is the arpeggiator, Kode9's is the echo chamber. If *Skream!* is what you listen to on the way to the rave to hype yourself up, then *Memories of the Future* is for the ride home, for the comedown as you traverse City X, looking twice over your shoulder to see if that was Spaceape

lurking in the busted sixth-floor window of the warehouse you just passed.

"Don't harass me for not behaving correct," sneers the gravelly voiced MC over Kode9's jolting rhythms, and it's impressive how Kode musically flips the script over and over again between the underlying warmth of the bass, the cold, plodding feel of the rhythm, and the disorienting production of Spaceape's lyrical flow. The diversity showcased on Hyperdub singles like "Kingston," "Backward," and "9 Samurai," and new tracks like "Glass" and "Portal," is truly impressive, with Spaceape sounding like different people at times. There are definitely some dancefloor gems here, too—both "Curious," featuring Ms. Haptic, and the too-short "Bodies" are superb movers—but Kode9 and Spaceape ultimately set out to inject their audio virus deep into your cerebrum; they succeed wildly on all fronts, creating a timeless script and the need to press rewind. *Matt Earp*

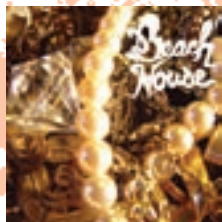


## Hey Willpower

### HEY WILLPOWER PDA

Tomlab/GER/CD

Even the most profoundly idiotic black-out drunkenness results in some small lesson learned. And with the perspective gained by electroclash's final, much-anticipated demise, we can now shamelessly enjoy—without the least bit of irony—the merits of a record like Hey Willpower's *PDA*. The San Francisco group, made up of former Imperial Teen singer Will Schwartz and producer Tomo, is unabashedly pious to Prince, Cameo, and other icons of the electronic '80s, when electro, freestyle, and pop gleefully top-rocked in sweat-drenched unison. Like devout contemporaries The National Trust and Chromeo, Schwartz references "Cars That Go Boom"—not in an ironic, white-label mash-up kind of way, but more as an homage by someone who actually rocked the original in a parking lot 20 years ago. At least, we hope that's the reason. *Steve Marchese*



### BEACH HOUSE BEACH HOUSE

Carpark/US/CD

Yo La Tengo can kick your ass, but Beach House, a Baltimore duo that creates gauzy and gentle soundscapes, wouldn't even put up a fight. Shuffling, bossa nova-like beats steadily punctuate their haze, a simple mixture of dreamy, escapist pop that's designed for wallowing. Singer Victoria Legrand sounds like an easy-going version of Maureen Tucker and exudes bittersweet romance, especially on "Master of None." Running at a grand total of 36 minutes, this album should be pressed onto an LP, if only because vinyl pops and hisses would compliment the sublime mood. *Patrick Sisson*

### THAVIUS BECK THRU

### CURSE OV DIALECT WOODEN TONGUES

Mush/US/CD

Mush drops two sophomore artist releases here, starting with Thavius Beck's 13-track, beat-crushed tirade. *Thru* is one heavy effort, pouring on the pressure from beginning to end with intense lyrical assaults ("Dedicated To Difficulty," "'98") and gnarly drum programming ("Yet And Still," "Under Pressure"). Curse ov Dialect,

conversely, couldn't take themselves any less seriously, elevating the frantic, fun-fueled hip-hop that Mush delivers so well. From the eclectic fusion of yard-sale samples to the *Monty Python*-esque lyrical treatments on tracks like "Word Up Forever" and "Jokes on Me," *Wooden Tongues* is bent in all the right places. *Doug Morton*

### JOHN BELTRAN HUMAN ENGINE

Milan/US/CD

John Beltran returns to his ambient roots with a sprawling and intimate collection that draws listeners into peaceful dreamscapes. *Human Engine* never strays far from a simplistic, melodic beauty. Take in "Some Place New," a soothingly pleasant tune with engaging chimes and bells set to lullaby tempo. The record is like a new spiritual awakening, encompassing the collective experiences of an artist who has blossomed and matured in his own right. One of his most accessible albums to date, it's a personal journey worth taking. *Velanche*

### BOLE 2 HARLEM

### BOLE 2 HARLEM VOL. 1

Sounds of the Mushroom/US/CD

Giving a futuristic nod to classic Ethiopian jazz and funk, B2H producer David Schommer stepped into the studio with a clear vision. With the help of vocalists Maki Siraj and Tigist Shibabaw, and his own incredibly clean programming abilities, he created one of the most fascinating takes on modern Ethiopian music this side of Bill Laswell. Hip-hop and soul vocal hooks are scattered throughout, but the overall effect is a caravan of nomadic spirits banging on heavy percussion, penetrative bass loops, and catchy harmonies. When the horns come blaring in, the anthemic battle cry is complete. *Derek Beres*

### CLAUDE VONSTROKE BEWARE OF THE BIRD

dirtybird/US/CD

Detroit native and San Francisco resident Barclay "Claude VonStroke" Crenshaw is eagle-eyed when it comes to tech-funk detail. Releasing singles on German labels Get Physical and Neuton—but mostly the dirtybird imprint that he runs with Justin Martin—CVS is internationally recognized for his percussive, swinging basslines and cheeky, swarthy details sure to please both Green Velvet and Alex Smoke. This CD collects the original dirty bird's output, bolstered with his remixes. The only caveat: as the majority of tracks were previously released as singles, the rubber ball only bounces so far from the core. *Tony Ware*

### CODE E ALGORITHM METHOD

Mule Musiq/JPN/CD

Born in Tokyo, this unique groove practitioner not only lends his focus in the music studio but also in the production of multimedia videogame platforms. Using his discernable knack for technological advancement, Code E's *Algorithm Method* features the work of a well-versed synth player performing a symphony of powerful, progressive tech-house bliss. Finding a finite balance between dub, disco, techno, and electro, this innovative technician cleanly mixes subtle melodies with distant harmonies. Not quite hard enough for a packed, peak-hour club, but perfect for that late night scenic drive to the afterhours. *Praxis*

### COUNT BASS D ACT YOUR WAIST SIZE

Fat Beats/US/CD

On tracks that rarely surpass the two-minute mark, the Nashville-based Count (born Dwight Farrell) raps like GZA and croons like Chet Baker over self-produced beats and live instrumentation. It's like free jazz custom-made for hip-hop heads with short attention spans. Occasionally, D veers toward more traditional songwriting, like on the 19th-century banger "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," but mostly we get concise collages that owe as much to the aesthetics of lo-fi indie rock as to Prince Paul. More serious than his last, *Dwight Spitz*, Count's latest provides a 30-something perspective on his life and hip-hop times. *James Mayo*

### ANTHONY DAVID THE RED CLAY CHRONICLES

Brash/US/CD

Alongside Anthony David, IndiaArie sounds magnificent on the duet "Words," here on David's sophomore outing. But it's David's soulful guitar strumming, and his dusky, woody, R&B-inflected voice that prove to be the album's most striking features. Aside from up production on tasteful beats and proving his place as modern troubadour with penetrating

lyrics, David's fervent slides on "Smoke One," and the funky "Sho Nuff" will make *The Red Clay Chronicles* as memorable as works by Donny Hathaway and Bill Withers, while "Everything Is Everything" has that intimate, lean-on-him sort of soul. *Derek Beres*

### DESMOND DEKKER IN MEMORIAM: 1941-2006

Secret/UK/CD

Desmond Dekker's most memorable music was about everyday things. And as *In Memoriam* illustrates, the recently deceased Dekker never slowed with age, dancing vibrantly over ska rhythms with his charming vocals. Whether he sang about his longing for an imagined home ("Pretty Africa"), pure heartache ("Pickney Gal"), or social unrest ("The More You Live"), his ultra-staccato style was lively and full of presence. Recorded in London, the music here is well crafted and comes packed with a booklet profiling Dekker's colorful life and music. These 20 tracks are wonderful reminders of his enduring artistry and charisma. *David Ma*

### DJ SLIP SHE'S A TIME TRAVELER

Brooklyn Beats/US/CD

Troy Geary (a.k.a. DJ Slip) gives us some trauma-center disco on "Conception of Cool" by spending his first two minutes carving a groove out of a life-support machine's whining bleeps and ticks. A *kalimba*-cradled Afro-runk rhythm then kicks in for dancefloor effect, but the track is a curious moment in an otherwise underwhelming record. "All Night" sounds created by a haunted Roland TB-303, and "Ufixedit" is a fine slab of micro-house that seems like it's been awake for three days. But too much of this album lacks the berserk tension and gonzo cleverness for which Brooklyn Beats is known. *Cameron Macdonald*

### TOD DOCKSTADER AERIAL #3

Sub Rosa/BEL/CD

Tod Dockstader can make you believe that everything you hear on the radio is from another planet. *Aerial #3* marks the final volume of the *musique concrète* pioneer's project, which translated hundreds of recorded hours of shortwave radio transmissions into music. Just like the previous chapters, the results range from deep, murmuring drones that fly over wastelands to microtones that crawl under your feet. It's disappointing that Dockstader did not explore the noise of voices regularly broadcast, but his *Aerial* series still delivers some of the eeriest sounds of the past year. *Cameron Macdonald*

### RICHARD DORFMEISTER VS. MADRID DE LOS AUSTRIAS GRAND SLAM

G-Stone/AUS/CD

Compiling years of collaborations between beatsmith Richard Dorfmeister and MDLA's Pogo and Heinz, *Grand Slam* features some tasty remixes and originals centered around a very summery theme: tennis. Forging bouncing bass and uplifting synths and vocals into solid house grooves, this production team churns out club-ready anthems. Their high-paced tweaking of Zero 7's gorgeous "In the Waiting Line" is a certain floor-smasher, and their tempering of Groove Armada, Koop, and Willie Bobo's sing-along "Spanish Grease" makes this a collection well worth seeking out. But the original sunny-day cut, "Boogie No More," is reason enough. *Derek Beres*

### FAT JON & STYROFOAM SAME CHANNEL

Morr Music/GER/CD

Once a member of Cincinnati's Five Deez, Fat Jon is the foremost evangelist of extra-terrestrial hip-house, with an immediately recognizable patois that spans the Atlantic. Belgian melan-tronica architect Arne Van Petegem (a.k.a. Styrofoam) represents the emotive sensibility and clever production that defines the Morr Music imprint. As a duo, the two deftly weave their art and craft together, retaining their strengths while creating an even more taut and accessible whole. An experimental, courageous, and wildly successful coupling of styles. *Steve Marchese*

### DAVE FISCHOFF THE CRAWL

Secretly Canadian/US/CD

As tales of reinvention go, Chicago-based singer-songwriter Dave Fischhoff's could sit comfortably aside *The Count of Monte Cristo*. On 1998's *Winston Park*, he kept residence in the shell of an idea, carving fuzz-caked frescoes in the poetic gloaming. But *The Crawl* comes across almost like a Terry Gilliam take on *Cristo*, all exaggerated pieces filmed with a fish-eye lens that rarely stray from the main character's rifts between fantasy and reality. Endearing indie-tronic melodies and low-bit pneumatics place Fischhoff in the territory of Figurine/Styrofoam, but the jittery staging never subverts the humanity. *Tony Ware*

### FLYING LOTUS 1983

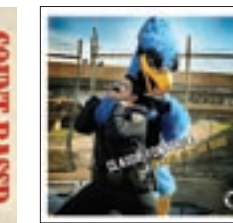
Plug Research/US/CD

Flying Lotus is the great-nephew of the sainted Alice Coltrane. Now that I have your attention, dig what this talented L.A. producer is laying down. *1983* is a rare species of cosmic underground hip-hop. Flying Lotus combines Madlib's affinity for jazzy arrangements and chord progressions, Nobody's and Daedelus' psychedelic textural proclivities, and J Dilla's economical, dusted funkiness. Further, the supremely rich and unusual tones Flying Lotus creates suggest that his great-aunt's musical talent has seeped into his own brain. Fans of innovative instrumental hip-hop are all the richer for that fortuitous skill transference. *Dave Segal*

### TOMMY GUERERRO FROM THE SOIL TO THE SOUL

Quannum/US/CD

Former teenage skate sensation Tommy Guererro has long since moved into a second career, making hard-to-define music that traces lazy patterns through the realms of indie rock, dub, down-tempo, and soul. *From the Soil to the Soul* stands as his finest effort to date. Earlier albums sounded experimental, yet unfocused; here, Tommy G's spacey, multifaceted sound gets some gravitas. It still meanders a bit, zig-zagging instead of traveling from point A to point B, but there's a sense that Guererro knows where he wants to lead you. Perfect for 3 a.m. stargazing, with a bit of prime-time partying thrown in. *Eric K. Arnold*



## The Rapture

### THE RAPTURE PIECES OF THE PEOPLE WE LOVE

Universal-Motown/US/CD

Ever since The Rapture exploded onto the scene with "House of Jealous Lovers," people have been wondering whether they could up the ante, or at least maintain their momentum from the *Echoes* LP. The answer to the hype? Extend—and develop—their dance formula even further. The band seems to have learned from their time spent with former producers The DFA; cowbells, 4/4 beats, and disco basslines abound. But the ultra-trendy production (by Ewan Pearson, Paul Epworth, and Danger Mouse), though facile and ear-pleasing, seems to lack some of the coherence and depth of their previous outing. This is not to say that the album is without highlights—"Who!" and "Get Myself" should work the floor as hard as "House" ever did—but it lacks the angst of "Olio" or the angularity of "Mirrors." *Pieces* won't alienate anybody; it may even win over a few new fans. It's precisely the right move—safe, fun, and unchallenging. *Alexander Posell*



**GYPTIAN**  
**MY NAME IS**

VP/US/CD

It was only two years ago that roots crooner I-Wayne was being hailed as the future of reggae, but an uneven album didn't equal the promise of a couple of hot singles. Like I-Wayne, Gyptian frequently employs *false* *voce* to carry across conscious themes, yet *My Name Is* rests on a solid red-gold-and-green bedrock—it would be an above-average album even without the instant classic “Serious Times.” DJ Flavor’s riddims continue dancehall’s retro-influenced trend with rub-a-dub bubblers and meditative *nyahbinghi* drumming, while Gyptian alternates between two personas: common man in love and concerned Rasta. *Eric K. Arnold*

**HIDDEN CAMERAS**

**AWOO**

Arts & Crafts/CAN/CD

Hallelujah! Or should I say, holy fuck! If there’s anything to know about Toronto’s premier homosexual folk-pop chorale, it’s that either phrase can apply. Principal songwriter Joel Gibb and his troupe—up to 16 members outfitted with guitars, violins, glockenspiel, drum machines, church bells, and organ—make an orchestral racket that’s formulaic while completely subverting formula. Not every song on *Awoo* will make you whoop, but the tender conviction of “Follow These Eyes” and the reaffirming gospel of “Death of a Tune” will make you want to join the chorus. *Rachel Shimp*



**HOME VIDEO**  
**NO CERTAIN NIGHT OR MORNING**

Defend/US/CD

There’s a lonely and beautiful sweep to the debut long-player from New York-based duo Collin Ruffino and David Gross (a.k.a. Home Video). The two deftly combine new wave-style synths, wistful vocals, and understated rock rhythms. The result is often minimalist, like “Dialogue Box,” which layers beats and synths for almost a full minute before the vocals kick in. Whether leaning more toward electronic (like “Pidpunk,” with an opening synth line straight outta 1983) or rock (the opening “Sleep Sweet,” with drumming that drives the song without detracting from the haunting melody), it’s consistently excellent. *Luciana Lopez*

**IMITATION ELECTRIC PIANO**  
**BLOW IT UP, BURN IT DOWN, KICK IT 'TIL IT BLEEDS**

Drag City/US/CD

Known for previous instrumental releases, post-rock-favoring Imitation Electric Piano undergoes a number of changes on their second LP: an expanded and shuffled lineup (including more overlap with Stereolab), the addition of singer Mary Hampton, and a stronger bent toward folk and acoustic guitars. Unfortunately, the vocals don’t always work. Hampton’s voice can be sweet, but often feels too airy and insubstantial. On the Simon and Garfunkel-sounding “For the Best,” the chorus is particularly lacking. On “Come Into Force,” the male and female vocals take a backseat to the electric guitar, and the track works better as a result. *Luciana Lopez*

**KASABIAN**

**EMPIRE**

Columbia/US/CD

There’s something about second-generation Britpop that seems very, very desperate—like guys trying to squeeze the last ounce of boyish exuberance from their fading youth. Kasabian’s second full-length, *Empire*, starts off promisingly, with the thumping bass and catchy string arrangements of the title track, but quickly spirals downward into *Sgt. Pepper’s*-meets-Primal Scream territory, only not half as good as that should sound. While the album has a few high points, such as “Me Plus One”’s handclaps and tambourines, what could have been a fun, light romp in early-’90s nostalgia just ends up being slightly obnoxious. *Cameron Cook*

**KIDZ IN THE HALL (NALEDGE & DOUBLE O)**

**SCHOOL WAS MY HUSTLE**

Major League-Rawkus/US/CD

Lupe Fiasco might be pushing the everyman-rapper angle hard but, on *School Was My Hustle*, fellow Chicago MC Naledge gives the skateboarder a run for his money. Teamed with DJ/producer Double O as Kidz in the Hall, Naledge proves that Ivy League guys (he and Double O are Penn grads) can rock the mic too, infusing tracks like “Go Ill” and “Dumbass Tales” with a healthy dose of personality and storytelling ability. While the project at times feels a little derivative of Kanye West’s *College Dropout*, it’s also a clever inversion of Kanye’s concept, extolling the virtues of formal education rather than mocking them. *Jesse Serwer*

**LUOMO**

**PAPER TIGERS**

Huume/GER/CD

Vladislav Delay might have chosen a better name for his highly anticipated third LP, but either way the result isn’t as ferociously beautiful as his previous body of work. Tough-customer fans spoiled by the aquatic shimmer of his micro-tech artistry will be disappointed with this record’s glacial momentum. Like *Vocalcity* and *The Present Lover* chopped, screwed, and suspended in space, nothing here sounds vital, though “Really Don’t Mind” might in the club. Vocalist Johanna Iivanainen is more disembodied than ever, and any lyrical resonance is buried within Delay’s programming. He remains a master sound architect, so here’s hoping *Paper Tigers* is a blueprint for what’s next. *Rachel Shimp*

**MOVE D**

**KUNSTSTOFF**

City Centre Offices/GER/CD

Originally released on Move D’s own Source Records in 1995, *Kunststoff* is back for a re-release on CCO. Any of you faux-hawkin’ glitchmeisters out there who want to fertilize your techno roots should put the Powerbook to sleep and go grab a copy of this album. The entirety of *Kunststoff*, from the 808-driven acid funk of “In/Out” and “Soap Bubbles” to the old-school loft-pumpin’ of “Eastman” and the exotic ambience of “Beyond the Machine,” is a testament to a time before plug-ins replaced wall warts and techno production was a true labor of love. *Doug Morton*

**NOVALIMA**  
**AFRO**

Quango/US/CD

Using slave songs and the *cajon*—a wooden box drum originally made from shipping crates—as a foundation for this eloquent, minimal-electronic project, four producers explore the antique folk sounds of Peru. Connecting Africa and South America sonically and socially, this outfit catalogs bits of local lore, adding synthesizers, congas, and excellent vocal sections. Swinging between the vivid (the jazzy, downtempo “Chinchivi”) and the club-ready (the trucking “Candela”), and extending the community work of singers like Susana Baca into futuristic forays, *Afro* is at once artifact and testament and, more poignantly, a simply beautiful record. *Derek Beres*

**OF MEXICAN DESCENT**  
**EXITOS Y MAS EXITOS (DDICIÓN DE LUJO)**

Temporary Whatever/US/CD

Listening to the deluxe version of this 1997 L.A. classic makes one wonder why the hell 2Mex and Xololanxinxo haven’t released any significant amount of new material together (as OMD) in so long. On this revamped disc, OMD’s previously released material, like the uplifting anti-greed anthem “Money Is Meaningless,” sounds as fresh as ever. Meanwhile, unearthed gems like the breezy, be-yourself joint “Atlas” (featuring Miko and Jizzm) provide plenty of welcome surprises from these proud bilingual rappers. Now can we get an official reunion please? *Max Herman*

**QWEL & MEATY OGRE**

**FREEZER BURNER**

**HELSENT**

**RAINWATER**

Galapagos4/US/CD

Chicagoans Qwel and Hellsent share a record label and a penchant for dark beats and complex poetics, but not much else. Where these two MCs particularly vary is in their rhymes. On his solo debut for Galapagos4, Hellsent (of Outerlimitz) typically kicks street-level glimpses of ghetto struggles, while Qwel’s latest effort sees him unleashing spiritual, God-fearing raps that are on a whole ‘nother page. Despite lyrical disparities, both are adept at sparking contemplation. And as seen on these two albums, both Qwel and Hellsent work best with primarily one producer (Meaty Ogre and Silence, respectively) at their side. *Max Herman*

**REANIMATOR**

**SPECIAL POWERS**

Community Library/US/CD

Community Library is known for releasing eclectic music that’s quirky and raw. Yet Reanimator’s *Special Powers* is simply composed of repetitive drums, random noise, and bleeps that hardly progress nor fuse well together. Neither experimental, ambient, or “electronica,” each track lacks cohesiveness, emotion, and rhythm. The insert touts that it’s “recorded live to two-track quarter-inch tape without the aid of a computer.” What does this translate to? Underdeveloped keyboard clatter, minus the raw charm of homemade recordings. Surely intended to be odd, *Special Powers* is indeed *special*—but not in a good way. *David Ma*

**RELAY**

**STILL POINT OF TURNING**

Bubblecore/US/CD

During the late ’80s and early ’90s, while the UK was awash in shoegaze feedback, there was a similar, nascent U.S. movement bubbling underground in places like Detroit and Boston. Now Philly can proudly mark an “X” on the domestic shoegazer map with Relay’s second LP. Helmed by ex-Swirlies studio guy Jeff Ziegler, Relay avoids the pratfall of needless noodling, and takes a melodic, almost poppy approach to ambient rock à la Swervedriver or Dinosaur Jr. The result has a déjà vu charm—you can sense the ghosts of feedback past, while we’re firmly planted in the here and now. *Steve Marchese*

**MAX RICHTER**

**SONGS FROM BEFORE**

Fat Cat/UK/CD

As an acclaimed contemporary composer, Max Richter has shown an impressive consistency in the quality of his work. Following 2004’s *The Blue Notebooks* and his production work on folkie Vashti Bunyan’s acclaimed *Lookaftering*, *Songs From Before* is a fitting next chapter in his career. Building off the format of *Notebooks*, *Songs From Before* pairs Richter’s warm piano compositions with readings of text written by novelist Haruki Murakami. And with its string section and carefully employed rock à la hiss, *Songs From Before* is a deeply moving, near-sacred work. *Josiah Hughes*

**SILICONE SOUL**  
**SAVE OUR SOULS**

Soma/UK/CD

It sucks when great artists try new things that don’t quite work. But anything that Craig Morrison and Graeme Reddie can cook up on a bad day is still loads better than most do at their peak. Silicone Soul’s third full-length finds them straying into quieter, more contemplative moments that somehow don’t sound as polished as their lean, crisp tech-house lines, through which emotion always shined so clearly. Fans will appreciate two standouts: “The Snakecharmer,” which curls exotic flute tones around bass notes like a slithering reptile, and “Margin For Madness,” which guides a dark journey into lovely acid recesses. *Janet Tzou*

**SKC**

**KILLING ME SOFTLY**

Commercial Suicide/UK/CD

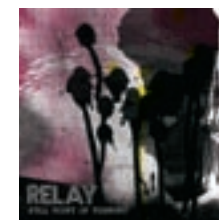
While *Killing Me Softly* is more or less a simple collection of DJ tracks, the quality of SKC’s production and songwriting makes it stand apart from the D&B crowd. With styles ranging from the uplifting atmospherics of “Worthwhile” and “Dream Come True” to the harder, teched-out sounds of “Alpha Centuri” and “Offshore (Rmx),” *Softly* manages to never resemble typical drum & bass filler. *Killing Me Softly* is remarkably focused and effective, and is a must-buy for fans of the genre. *Jason “Method One” Leder*

**SO PERCUSSION**

**AMID THE NOISE**

Cantaloupe/US/CD

So Percussion studies many greats and has a sharp ear for tone, but something’s amiss here. The New York trio experiments with pipes, glockenspiel, vibraphone,



**NIobe**

**WHITE HATS**

Tomlab/GER/CD

Look up “indie” in the dictionary and you might see a picture of Cologne-based Yvonne “Niobe” Cornelius. Everything about this Mouse on Mars songbird is strictly anti-commercial: her eerily unsettling, quivering voice (think of a darker Cat Power); her obvious preference for minor keys; and her penchant for distinctly radio-unfriendly arrangements (despite a CD sticker advertising “a variety of pop styles”). Cornelius takes the folk chanteuse element that labels like Morr typically pair with electronic rock, and instead pits her ghostly vocals against any number of musical backgrounds including muted, bittersweet twangs on the rosy-hued reminiscence “Phosphorous,” and the wistful, old-world air of “The Hills,” where she sounds like a ’40s lounge singer. There’s even an echo of old Siouxsie and the Banshees harmonies beneath Cornelius’ quiet tenor: on “Shirocco & Mistral,” a similarly dusky dreaminess blooms within her soft notes, bridging the haunted gap between this world and the next. *Janet Tzou*



**A.G.**

**GET DIRTY RADIO**

Look/US/CD

New Yorker A.G. isn’t the first MC you’d expect to see working with a lineup of mostly Left Coast producers. These days, though, even artists that rep their region to the fullest can branch out and still keep it true. So after years of spitting almost exclusively over Showbiz’s jeep beats, A.G. reawakens *Get Dirty Radio* by connecting with Californians (Madlib, Oh No, and DJ Design) and even a Norwegian (Tommy Tee). All things considered, this Bronx native sounds pretty on-point riding hazy G-funk (“Take a Ride”) and dusty psychedelic grooves (“Triumph”). While unexpected, the collaborations work simply because these producers have been listening to A.G. for so long. But at the end of the day, nobody knows A.G. better than his oldest friend—when Show hooks up his old partner with some soulful boom-bap on “The Struggle,” this MC’s striking hood narratives resonate the loudest. *Max Herman*



wood planks, metal, marimba, duct tape, and even an Ethernet port. The result plays like soothing minimalist wallpaper. "May" lays down a brilliant Steve Reich-style vibe among samples of human gibberish, and "Go" treads upon a music-box groove that many IDM blokes could never get right. But there is a nagging sense that So Percussion only gives five percent of their power here. *Cameron Macdonald*

**SOULPHICTION**  
**STATE OF EUPHORIA**

Sonar Kollektiv/GER/CD

Michel Baumann, a veteran producer with a variety of aliases and labels under his belt, traverses genres but remains rooted in future soul. As Soulphiction, his *State of Euphoria* oozes with compelling beats and funky melodies, with more than a hint of jazz thrown in. "Make It Slow" is a mood-enhanced boiler that starts with disjointed organ action and grows darker and more gripping by the minute. How much further can the merging of organic soul and electronic beats go? Who knows, but it's nice that Soulphiction skillfully blends them into one fresh collection. *Velanche*



**STEPHEN BRODSKY'S OCTAVE MUSEUM**  
**STEPHEN BRODSKY'S OCTAVE MUSEUM**

Hydra Head/US/CD

Unlike his day job fronting proto-metalcore giants Cave-In, Stephen Brodsky's work in Octave Museum sees the artist completely ditching aggression in favor of mid-tempo pop songs. Some tracks, such as opener "Voice Electric," pan out decently, offering a suave Deerhoof falsetto and some snazzy guitar work. More often than not, however, the record emulates bad '90s alterna-pop like Dandy Warhols ("Sentimental Case," "Kid Defender"). There are definitely some decent ideas on this record, but none good enough to merit wide release on a label as renowned as Hydra Head. *Josiah Hughes*



**Johann Johannsson**

**JOHANN JOHANNSSON**  
**IBM 1401, A USER'S MANUAL**

4AD/UK/CD  
On *IBM 1401, A User's Manual*, Icelandic composer Johann Johannsson creates an elegy not only to the first (relatively affordable) mass-produced digital, all-transistorized business computer but also implicitly to his father Johann Gunnarsson, a maintenance engineer who managed to coax sounds out of the machine, despite it not being built for this purpose. When the machine was withdrawn from service in 1971, its "music" was played for a final time and documented on tape. Three and a half decades later, Johannsson has (via a 60-piece string orchestra) recorded his responses to these melodies, finding beauty in the limited audio emissions of the five-foot-high grey machine. The occasional deployment of a mid-'60s maintenance instruction tape is a little grounding (kitschy, even) but otherwise *IBM 1401, A User's Manual* is a touching and very lovely album indeed. *David Hemingway*

**SUN OK PAPI K.O.**  
**ORCHESTRE PHILHARMONOK**

Sonig/GER/CD

Formerly one half of Scratch Pet Land, Laurent Baudoux is currently slated for world domination with his full-length debut as solo alias Sun OK Papi K.O. The musical equivalent of an all-night *Dr. Mario* party, *Orchestre Philharmonok* is the most bizarre fun you can have this year. From the 8-bit synths to the cut-up guitar fragments to the grimy verses from Japan's MC Illreme, *Philharmonok* is the sort of innocent amusement that's impossible to critique. Call it sound collage, call it glitch... no one cares. This is music for dancing, grinning, and laughing to. *Josiah Hughes*

**SVALASTOG**  
**WOODWORK**

Rune Grammofon/NOR/CD

On *Woodwork*, Per Henrik Svalastog plays traditional instruments such as Norwegian zither, ram's horn, and cow's horn, and then runs them through computer software programs, coating each with an appealingly odd sheen. What ensues is a peculiarly Scandinavian take on folktronica: emotionally reserved yet not without poignancy; elegantly designed, and fizzing with miniaturist intrigue. Svalastog's digital processing is so subtle that you never feel like you're fully in the distant past, nor in the up-to-the-minute present. *Woodwork* suspends you in a golden mean in which synthetic and organic elements are in wondrous equilibrium—a rare feat. *Dave Segal*

**THUNDERBALL**  
**CINESCOPE**

ESL/US/CD

DC's Thunderball rolls out their third offering, harvesting from spy cinema, Vegas, Brazil, funk, and dub, and treating listeners to collabos with Afrika Bambaataa and See-I's Roots and Zeebo. Loads of beats with multitudinous samples will feel comfy to some and clichéd to others. Either way, this is fine fodder for chic hotel bars or jetsetters' lounges. Thunderball stands in good stead with labelmates Thievery Corporation, and if you dig Groove Armada, *Cinescope* can share shelf or 'Pod space without a fight. *Stacy Meyn*

**TRISTEZA**  
**EL NUESTRO DESAFIO**

Better Looking/US/CD-DVD

Unlike the spiraling guitar instrumentals of their previous effort *A Colores*, Tristeza's latest disc is a mostly formless slate of ambient drum-tracking. Sure, there are a few atmospheric, but barely any of them come from a guitar, and none of the songs stick around long anyway. Only the hypnotic nine-minute title track aims for epic proportions; the rest barely clock in more than two minutes apiece, and often sound like half-finished experiments that were adopted then abandoned. Much more compelling and illuminating is the accompanying DVD, which shows the band gut it out on the road. *Scott Thill*

**JEAN-CLAUDE VANNIER**  
**L'ENFANT ASSASSIN DES MOUCHES**

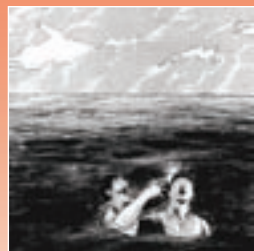
B-Music/US/CD

The arranger for Serge Gainsbourg's classic *Histoire de Melody Nelson*, Vannier surpassed his French associate with his own 1972 LP, *L'Enfant Assassin des Mouches*, which inexplicably remained out of print until its 2005 reissue. *L'Enfant* emits a cornucopia of compellingly eccentric sounds, both musical and found. It is polymorphously perverse, restlessly style-hopping among psych rock, jazz, funk, baroque prog, *musique concrète*, and unclassifiable madness. Vannier's orchestrations and choirs veer between whimsical and menacing, and his flamboyantly dizzying arrangements convince one that *L'Enfant* has enough fascinating facets around which to base an awesome film—preferably by Alejandro Jodorowsky. *Dave Segal*

**CHRISTOPHER WILLITS**  
**SURF BOUNDARIES**

Ghostly International/US/CD

Christopher Willits is one of the few producers that has conquered his machinery so well that, at any time, pop can become noise and noise can become harmony within a span of minutes. On *Surf Boundaries*, the guitar-processing master finds serene solace through chirping effect patches nestled between atmospheric tidal waves, bouncing from decadent swirls to chopped-up flutters. Aside from the subtle, epic instrumentation, it's the presence of dual vocals of Willits and his ex-flame Latrice Barnett that really make this one of the year's most prized emotive possessions. *Fred Miketa*



**XELA**  
**The Dead Sea CD/LP**

John Twells helps run the fast-rising **Type** label, and records as **Xela**. As a student of obscurant and artful sound, Twells makes deliberately expansive mood-music, citing **Wolf Eyes**, **Edgar Allen Poe** and **Dario Argento** as influences. His third release, *The Dead Sea* is also his finest, a fully-submerged psychedelic vision of free doom folk metal.



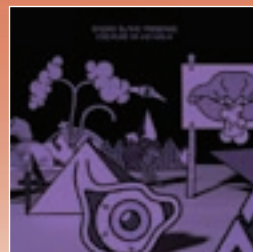
**SHINEDOE**  
**Sound Travelling CD**

Hotly-tipped Dutch club queen finally drops her full-length statement. Her biggest fans include **Garnier**, **Luciano** and **Ricardo**, she's remixed **The Knife** and **Booka Shade**, and she's played at the biggest festivals in the world. A 9-part new view of techno — think **Detroit** meets **Berlin**, but somewhere deep in a West African rainforest. Polyrhythms abound.



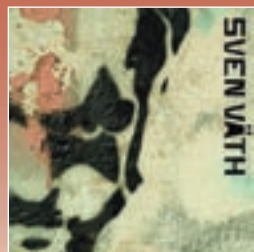
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**4 Women No Cry Vol 2. CD/LP**

The second in the acclaimed annual series. This time, we visit New York (**Dorit Chrysler**), Berlin (**Monotekktoni**), London (**Mico**) and Barcelona (**Iris**). The result is an explosion of style, ranging from Theremin balladry, cinematic soundclash, manga film scores to four-track electro. From the always-worthwhile **Monika** label force, specially selected for you by European punk icon **Gudrun Gut**.



**RADIO SLAVE**  
**Creature of the Night CD**

For the latest in **Eskimo's** top-shelf mix CD collection (**Optimo**, **Glimmers**, **Chromeo**, etc.) they're onto Brighton and **Matt Edwards** (aka **Radio Slave**). After his remixes for **The Knife** and **Kylie**, the man is starting to smoke. This epic mix features **Villalobos**, DFA's **Shit Robot**, **Corey Hart** (!) and **The Osmonds** (WHAT?). Call 911, the roof is on fire.



**SVEN VÄTH**  
**In The Mix: The Sound of the 7th Season CD**

Leave it to **Väth** to package 2006 in a nice, clean 2CD set. The grandmaster of the **Cocoon** landscape, Frankfurt's finest has been dropping grooves since 1982 and does not feel like stopping. Now one of the biggest draws at **Ibiza**, Väth defines the year with names like **Pooks**, **Misc.**, **Voorn**, **Audion** and the omnipresent **Solid Groove**.



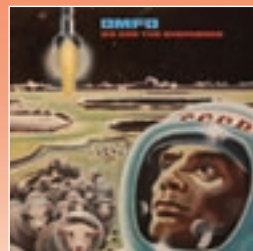
**PAUL KALKBRENNER**  
**ReWorks CD**

Herr Kalkbrenner is the secret weapon of esteemed Berlin musikhäus **BPitch Control**. Here, techno royalty revisit his deep 12" catalog for a prismatic interpretation: Frenchman **Agoria**, party boys **Modeselektor**, Dutchman **Joris Voorn** and Kompakt's **Michael Mayer** all contribute. Add 5 more to the mix and it's a veritable manifesto for the new club sound of Europe.



**GESCOM**  
**MiniDisc CD**

Finally, the legendary MiniDisc recordings of **Autechre** versus **Russell Haswell** on CD. It won the highly-respected **Prix Ars Electronica Award** in 1998 before moving onto the pedestal of electronic connoisseurs worldwide. Multi-styled and awesome, ranging from shoe-gazing ambience to hip-hop to techno. **Gescom** officially includes a gallimaufry of wizards but this one sees sonic assailant Haswell with the famous **Brown/Booth** duo. Finally.



**O.M.F.O.**  
**We Are The Shepards CD**

This is **Our Man from Odessa** or **German Popov**. The follow-up to the critically-acclaimed *Trans Balkan Express* ("Futurism meets folklore." —**Earplug**). With the assistance of **Atom Heart** as producer, Popov continues to bend the traditions of the Ukraine into the modern club setting. Boy, it works. Plus two songs from "Will appear on the soundtrack to the film **Borat**."



**JAY HAZE**  
**Mindin Business Part 1: The Minimal Grind 2CD**

Huge CD debut of some of the finest tracks from the **Jay Haze** kingdom. **Philadelphia's** own techno ninja, Haze relocated to Europe to become an icon of the new minimal club sound. He runs the **Textone**, **Contexterror** and **FutureDub** labels, DJs all around Europe and records as **Fuckpony** for **Get Physical**. This is the double mix-CD where he brings all that together for you.



**DR. LEKTROLUV**  
**Live Recorded at Extrema Outdoor 2CD**

Long under-represented in the domestic market, **Dr. Lektroluv** has been unleashing carefully-curated electro comps for years (the **Lektroluv** series) and is a kind of mega-tastemaker in his own Belgium. This, though, is a Lektroluv live DJ set and it's brilliant. **Cajmere**, **New Order**, **Vitalic**, **Röyksopp**, **The Cure**, **Linus Loves** and 22 more. Hold onto your socks.



**ANJA SCHNEIDER**  
**Back to Back 2CD**

Mobilee is named by some as the most forward-thinking dance label on earth ("one of the heaviest labels out there right now." —**Philip Sherburne**) and now they put some of those top-played 12"s on their debut CD set. Disc one is the best of the label, selected by owner **Anja Schneider**, and disc 2 is packed with razor sharp remixes.



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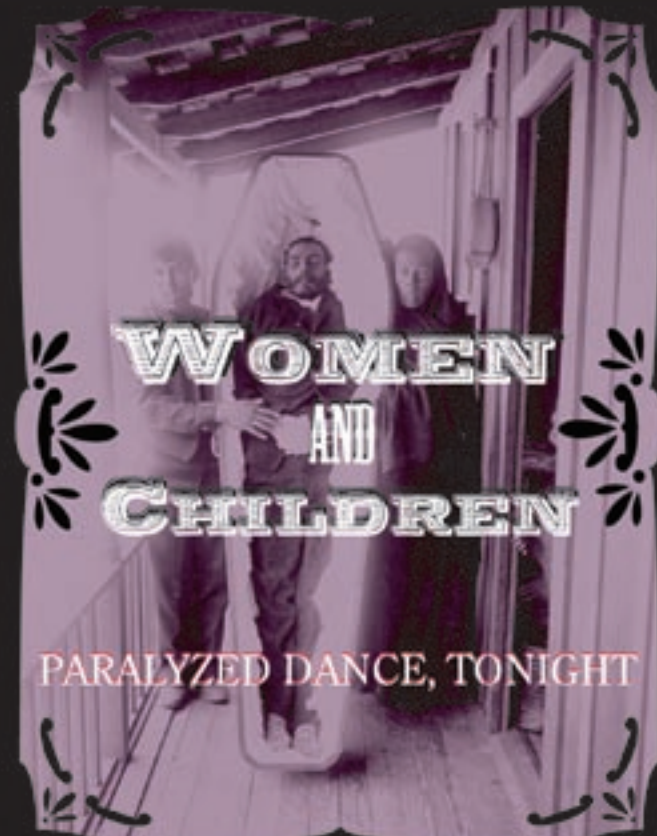
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"June's dominant sultry, sedating vocals evoke blending parallels to Siouxsie Sioux and Nico into her own wondrous mix that simply hypnotized." -Smashing Mag

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# WOMEN AND CHILDREN

PARALYZED DANCE, TONIGHT

## Nina Simone



## Comp Reviews 12.06



### THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME FOR SOME JAZZ AND SOUL CLASSICS

**NINA SIMONE: REMIXED AND REIMAGINED**  
RCA-Legacy/US/CD

**THE TIMELESS INTERPRETATIONS**  
Dopeness Galore/NETH/CD

You're a record label and you've got some masters sitting around in the vaults gathering dust and not making much money. What do you do? Easy. Farm out the tapes to a gaggle of remixers, get a check from the marketing department, and hope for the best. After the wildly uneven results of the remix compilations from Verve and Blue Note, I am, at best, skeptical of such efforts, but two recent works—one focusing on the songs of singer Nina Simone and the other on the catalog of Netherlands jazz label Timeless—prove that there is real potential in the concept.

*Remixed and Reimagined* obviously benefits from the raw strength of Nina Simone herself. From her dreams of becoming a classical pianist while growing up in rural Tryon, NC, to her student days at Juilliard in the 1950s, through albums that defied categories as she explored (and helped define) jazz, pop, and soul, Simone was always searching, armed with her vibrant voice and an unflinching ear for truth. One wonders what the singer—who was known for her uncompromising and often adversarial relationships with promoters, labels, and audiences alike—would think of this project, particularly lackluster inclusions like Chris Coco's milquetoast mix of "To Love Somebody." But one can easily imagine Simone appreciating the 4 a.m. New Jersey house party vibe of Tony Humphries' take on "Turn Me On," an example of how it's possible to take the vocal track from one song, completely flip the backing instrumentals, and come out smelling like roses. She would probably also smile on the lighter touch of Nickodemus, who adds a crisp, midtempo hip-hop beat and well-judged production elements to a respectful remix of "O-O-Oh-Child"—it manages to sound like a completely new song, and a bumping one at that.

*The Timeless Interpretations* does not have the luxury of Simone's instantly recognizable voice. What it does have is the stellar catalog of the Timeless label—700-titles

deep—plus a dozen producers known for their own vision of today's jazz as it relates to the modern dancefloor, and a solid sense of compilation programming, where like tempos and vibes progress into a solid mix. Key Brown takes hold of Vera Cruz's "Batitada" and gives it the full hip-hop treatment, lopping off bits to create mesmerizing samples and adding his own rough rhymes; The Politik (a.k.a. Mark de Clive-Lowe and Bembe Segue) updates Eddie Marshall's "High Priestess of Gone" with chopped MPC handclaps and a gently lurching beat. There are some weak spots, like the wandering Wouda version of Johnny Griffin's "The Jamfs Are Coming" and the use of crowd applause to bridge between tracks (it always seems crass to use an audience's approval of one performance to prop up another). But *The Timeless Interpretations* regains its footing with an absolutely jamming John Arnold version of "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing"—where the Detroit guitarist/producer bangs a huge kick drum up against raw piano chords and his fusion fretwork—and a wild, minimal makeover of Art Blakey's "Kenji's Walk" courtesy of Alex Attias.

The old chestnut is that modern producers rely on borrowing ideas, creating something that is a mere shadow of the original. On *Remixed And Reimagined* and *The Timeless Interpretations*, some of the musicians represented actually have the guts to steal songs and make them their own. *Peter Nicholson*



**CHEM087CD+DVD**

Chemikal Underground/UK/CD-DVD

When Glasgow band The Delgados started Chemikal Underground 11 years ago to release their single "Monica Webster" b/w "Brand New Car," they likely didn't think that it would go on to influence the next generation of Brit-pop kings and queens. Folks like Bis, Radar Bros, Mogwai, and Arab Strap would all rise to relative fame with the push that the label provided. And though a number of the bands have since broken up, their wistfully morose tunes (see Arab Strap's drumbox-driven "I Work in a Saloon") continue to define the darker, non-Belle and Sebastian side of Glasgow's once ridiculously prolific scene. Hell, even American flourishes like Interpol's gothy "5" are thrown in. But the real treat here is, without a doubt, the accompanying DVD, featuring videos that most of us without *Top of the Pops* access would never see, including seven from Arab Strap alone. Brilliant. *Aaron Ashley*

diligently documenting the rise of the dark South London style coined dubstep. Thankfully they dusted off their dubplates and compiled *The Roots of Dubstep*, featuring 14 O.G. classics from El-B, Horsepower, Artwork, and more. Fast forward to now and dubstep is making everyone from hip-hop to house heads take notice. On *Science Faction*, breakbeat scientist Clever rounds up the freshest Planet Mu and Hotflush acetates and meticulously mixes sub-bass momentum over sparsely skanked-out riddims. Highlights include Pinch's wobble-fest "Punisher" and Scuba's metal-dub "Twista." *Ryan Romana*

**A RAGA FOR PETER WALKER**

Tompkins Square/US/CD

After 37 long years, the legendary über-guitarist Pete Walker returns—this time with the mystique of Thurston Moore, Greg Davis, and Jack Rose in tow. Walker studied under Ravi Shankar and collaborated with Timothy Leary in organizing "celebrations," and now his virtuosity reaches new levels, straying from his psych-folk past and entering into a neo-classical-psych-flamenco universe. This living homage to the master is particularly honored with Greg Davis' heavily processed concrete ode "Truly We Dwell in Happiness." Between the visions of a completely realized Walker and his all-star legion of admirers, this collection just may be the gateway to the next level of avant-guitar heaven. *Fred Miketa*

**CITIES: VARIATIONS**

Yep Roc/US/CD

Listening to *Cities*, one thing is obvious—these guys have done their homework when it comes to obscure punk rhythms and experimental overtones. *Variations* keeps that studiosness in check, but adds an even darker flair, courtesy of searing remixes by Ladytron, Daedelus, and Isan. Although every song retains *Cities*' pop sensibility, Fog takes the cake with his charmingly hostile "Black Metal Mix," turning the otherwise pensive "OOC" into satanic hellfire. Since *Cities* is yet to take the already bloated indie scene by the proverbial balls, a comp of this magnitude just showcases the band's genuine potential. *Fred Miketa*

**ESL REMIXED: THE 100TH RELEASE OF ESL MUSIC**

ESL/US/CD

During DC's steamy 1995 summer, Eric Hilton and Rob Garza (a.k.a. Thievery Corporation) took the bumpin' Eighteenth Street Lounge and went label. An adoration of bossa nova, acid jazz, and breakbeat bred a roster that would include Nicola Conte, Ursula 1000, Thunderball, Federico Aubele, Sofa Surfers, Chris Joss, and Blue States. ESL's 100th release grooves with powerhouse guest remixers spicing up the imprint's heavy hitters. Nickodemus (who just joined ESL), Boca 45, Beatfanatic, Bombay Dub Orchestra, and Medeski Martin & Wood (among others) do the redux with heapin' helpings of bass, breaks, and funkification, and a lovely glaze of deep house. *Stacy Meyn*

**LAURENT GARNIER & CARL CRAIG: THE KINGS OF TECHNO**

BBE-Rapster/UK/CD

Anyone who follows BBE's *The Kings* of series knows it's more like the "whatever the artist feels like" series. On the techno installation, Laurent Garnier, arguably the most fearless techno DJ on the planet, selects Aretha Franklin and The Temptations as historically relevant forerunners (but honestly, who would buy this comp if they truly needed a history lesson?). In an affectionate move, Craig and Garnier each select a track from the other (Garnier and Shazz's "Acid Eiffel," and Craig's "No More Words"). This, at least, feels appropriate, since "Acid Eiffel" still ranks as one of the definitive acid tracks of all time. *Janet Tzou*

**GREEN VELVET VS. CAJMERE: MINISTRY OF SOUND SESSIONS**

Ministry of Sound/UK/CD

DJ iconoclast Curtis Jackson schools house fans again on a double-disc mix that pits his most famous alter egos against one other. Taking a typically rapturous turn on the soulful Cajmere disc, he really rocks the vocal tracks, integrating them with the same precision a jazz drummer applies to slipping in drum fills. Alternating between tribal chants, singer Dajae's gospel-strength roar, and the gibberish sounds of a ranting old man, Jackson showcases the human voice as a varied and powerful instrument. The acid-drenched Green Velvet disc is a lesson in keeping after-hours parties dirty and unhinged. A schizophrenic masterpiece. *Patrick Sisson*

**IN PRISON: AFRO AMERICAN PRISON MUSIC FROM BLUES TO HIP HOP**

Trikont/GER/CD

The title of this disc—which collects prison-related songs, from 1959 field recordings at Louisiana's infamous Angola prison to Akon's 2004 smash "Locked Up"—is pretty

self-explanatory. What's curious is that it comes from Germany, since it seeks to draw awareness to the alarming number of black prisoners in the U.S. Overall, *In Prison* provides an excellent cross-section of black prison music, from "Work Song," Nina Simone's tribute to chain gang blues, to "Living Proof" by Lifers Group, the assemblage of inmates at New Jersey's Rahway Prison who were recruited to make a *Scared Straight*-like rap album for Hollywood BASIC in 1993. Ill musicology. *Jesse Server*

**ECCENTRIC SOUL: MIGHTY MIKE LENABURG**

The Numero Group/US/CD

Think of soul and you think of certain cities: Detroit, Chicago, Memphis. For a stretch of the late '60s and early '70s, "Mighty" Mike Lenaburg, producer, promoter, and DJ, did his best to put Phoenix, AZ on the soul map with a run of one-off labels, bands, and records that documented the fringes of soul's evolution from R&B to heavy funk. *Eccentric Soul* is Lenaburg's legacy, starting with the doo wop-influenced R&B of the Soul Blenders and peaking with Ronnie Whitehead's drop-dead James Brown impressions. Phoenix never flew as a soul town, but it didn't melt in the sun either. *Rob Geary*

**JOEY NEGRO: THE MANY FACES OF JOEY NEGRO**

Z/UK/CD

It's not easy to sound frisky after nearly 15 years in the DJ business. But Joey Negro is no stranger to reinvention: *Faces* plucks from his various production monikers, each slightly refashioning his own old-school stylings. Akabu's "I'm Not Afraid of the Future" pairs a strapping techno hook with Negro's trademark vocals and exuberant house melodies, while Sunburst Band's "Far Beyond" offers a study in shuffling rhythms and jazz-inflected piano keys. It's Negro's effortlessness that makes his tunes so inviting: in a few sweeping notes, the promise of a house beat on an early-morning dancefloor feels as fresh as ever. *Janet Tzou*

**NEW YORK NOISE VOL. 3: 1979-1984**

Soul Jazz/UK/CD

The third installation in the *New York Noise* series showcases, well, the noisier side of early no wave. Unlike the first two volumes, this chaotic dive into the era displays the antithesis of structure via feedback and drum programming from experimental icons like Martin Rev, Ike Yard, and Ut. As on the first two collections, every artist chosen illuminates the touchstones from which modern genre-bending punks received their inspiration. As such, this look into the roots of post-everything music could easily act as a history lesson as well as a Brooklyn party favorite. *Fred Miketa*

**PARTY-KELLER VOL. 2**

Compost/GER/CD

Crate-digging don Florian Keller ventures once again on a global music spree of funkified delights. Named after his monthly club night in Munich, this compilation casts a wide net. Whereas the first volume pulled music from the way-back machine, this one explores funkateers of the 21st century. The Lefties Soul Connections cover DJ Shadow's "Organ Donor" with some killer organ and bass interplay, while Sidewinder's bumpin' floor-filler "Ego Riot" proves that Glasgow can stir up wicked, organic soul business with the best of them. Yes, the new school does it the old-school way. Dig! *Velanche*

**PAUL KALKBRENNER REWORKS**

Bpitch Control/GER/CD

Getting the spit 'n' polish treatment from a cadre of mostly German techno producers, Paul Kalkbrenner's music takes on a sleeker vibe than before. You don't need to see Ellen Allien & Appar's name on their remix of "Queer Fellow"—a slowly percolating track filled with echoing scrapes of sound—to know it's their handiwork. Alexander Kowalski gives Kalkbrenner's popular single "Gebrünn Gebrünn" a booming, models-on-the-runway feel, while Modeselektor's mix makes "Gia 2000" skip along at a rock-steady pace. Remixes can sometimes become personality clashes between artists, but these tracks exude a more collaborative vibe. *Patrick Sisson*

**RADIO SLAVE: CREATURE OF THE NIGHT**

Eskimo/BEL/CD

Under his Radio Slave guise, Matt Edwards is the master of the remix. On *Creature of the Night*, the slave-keeper pulls out an Excalibur of post-disco hymns (most of which he reworked himself) that recall the 2 a.m. underground—a leap from his recent Kylie Minogue remixes. Edwards covers a lot of territory on this mixtape, with tracks from The Kills, Ricardo Villalobos, and an un-tampered version of Corey Hart's "Sunglasses at Night." While this mix is much more minimal than productions under his Rekid moniker, Edwards' attention to simplicity goes just as far in his DJing as it does his futuristic compositions. *Fred Miketa*

**TUMBA FRANCESCA**

**AFRO CUBAN MUSIC FROM THE ROOTS**

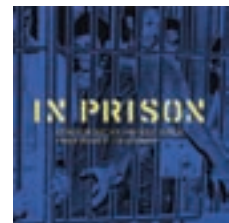
Soul Jazz/UK/CD

The scene is set pretty quickly when, on the disc's opening track, a narrator explains that Afro-Cuban music is both "a link to the ancestry of Africa and a gateway to the New World." Unlike the far more processed jazz variant, this collection is as unrefined as pure sugarcane, and musically just as sweet. The CD is as raw as it is fantastic: vibrant rhythms barely removed, if at all, from traditional folkloric ritual, bursting with intense percussion workouts, impassioned call-and-response vocals, and abrupt whistle-stops. This is where it all began: Call it original organic breaks. *Eric K. Arnold*

**WIRED ONES**

Wired/GER/CD

Over the past few years, a bustling, early-'90s female electro revival has emerged from the underground school of Peaches and Le Tigre. *Wired Ones* represents the most recent graduates from this once exclusive scene. Featuring a host of ironically sexual, aerobics-class hits from new schoolers like Scream Club, Dynasty Handbag, and Angie Reed, each retro jam reflects a certain electro-feminine experience of music. While it's politically challenging, few tracks live up to the message. You can only hear so many lo-fi beats and allusions to Sparks and boobs before you start longing for the days of Peaches' first record. *Fred Miketa*



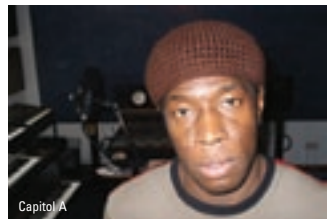
**WHAT IT IS!: FUNKY SOUL AND RARE GROOVES 1967-1977**

Rhino/US/4CD

As musicologist Oliver Wang writes in his liner notes to *What It Is!*, "for every 'Sex Machine' or 'Flashlight' blowing up the charts, you had hundreds of smaller songs for whom 'airplay' rarely got better than hissing out of a rusted jukebox..." Therein lies the premise behind one of the hottest funk/soul comps to be released in years, a four-disc set mined from the deposits of Atlantic, Atco, and Warner Brothers Records between. Lesser-known soul giants like Clarence Carter (think "Strokin'"), then listen to the gorgeous "Snatching it Back") and Artie Christopher share space with The Meters' heavy trunk funk and Eddie Hazel's inspired cover of "California Dreamin'," which combine to create a wondrous ride through one of American music's most overlooked eras. And with an 80-page guide through funk and soul's social and political grooves, plus a 25-piece 7-inch compendium package to follow, this box is a must-have for any '60s music fan. *Ken Taylor*



**Broken Business**  
By Peter Nicholson  
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Capitol A



Markus Enochson



Mark de Clive-Lowe

"You're walking along the street, or you're at a party/Or else you're alone, and then you suddenly dig/You're lookin' in someone's eyes, and suddenly realize/That this could be the start of something big." Full props to Mark Murphy (channeling Steve Allen ca. 1958) for providing me with this month's intro, thanks to his super-swinging vocals on the latest from **Ricky Tick** and **The Five Corners Quintet**. Murphy graces both sides of this disc, with the previously mentioned lyrics riding a thick hip-hop beat from **Povo** on the b, and **Nicola Conte** getting all live jazzy on the a.

Speaking of live-band action, got to shout out **Sleep Walker's** *The Voyage* (Especial). Technically, I think this one may be an album, but since it's on vinyl, only has five tracks, and is Japan-only, I'll run the risk of my Ed's ire and quickly give the rundown: red-hot instrumental chops form the likes of **Hajime Yoshizawa** on keys, and go straight to b1 for hot sax with **Yukimi Nagano** on the mic.

Rewind, selector! Missed a trio of Sonar Kollektiv releases coming at the tail end of the summer, but better late than never, no? Known far and wide for his madcap antics, **Capitol A** gets the **Starship** treatment, which works especially well on the broken hi-stepper "Serve It Up." Meanwhile, **Markus Enochson** gets some banging house mixes of "For You to See," but I'm digging the original, with its stop-and-go rim shots and Masaya's rich, soulful singing. Nice 'n' twinkly keys, too. Finally, hockey-playin' rising star **Moonstarr** delivers his patented percussion madness on his remix of "Dancetrack" by **Feindrehstar**.

Another one I missed (understandably, it's been hard to track down one of the 750 copies of limited-edition red, gold, and green colored vinyl) was the **Nightmares on Wax** *African Pirates 12*. **Mark Pritchard** turns in a pair of predictably hot **Troubleman** re-rubs and new-to-me **JD73** goes wild with a handclap- and squirming synth version that could be the freaky offspring of SA-RA, Jimmy Edgar, and DJ Spinna.

One of our favorite defenders of the broken beat faith, **Mark de Clive-Lowe**, has been a busy boy with a pair of remixes for Ether Music. "Your Mess," from classic UK soul crooner **Omar**, bumps swirling strings up against brisk brass, while "E Muita Gig Ve," by Brazilian master **Ed Motta**, is a frantic excursion into spacey synths, dubbed-out vocals, and a ruthlessly rising bassline. The Motta's a monster!

D'ya like bongos? Who doesn't? There's plenty of them on the unnamed **Summer Children** EP from new label Kid Recordings. Lots of hot house tunes, but I'm feeling "Free Me," a fast Latin jam with rich chords and some fiery piano.

Keeping the Latin vibe going, but heading in entirely different direction, is a new single from **Sabo & Zeb** on Nickodemus' excellent Wonderwheel Recordings. "Gibraltar" has a hot guitar riff, echo-drenched vocal samples, and Rhodes over a shuffling beat, while "Afro Azucar" rips the rolling percussion and heads to the mother continent for the guitar style. Seb also has solo EP out—the dubby highlife feel of "Revolutionary Dreams" is tops, with conscious lyrics and bright horns blasting away at the man.

Alrighty then, I can feel the bottom of the page rushing on up. Until next month, may all your beats be broken, jazzy, or both.



**Basic Needs**  
By Kid Kameleon  
LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



Hey-O-Hansen



Society Suckers

First off, have to big-up Pressing Issues, the democratic dubstep label formed out of www.dubstepforum.com. Through a complex voting system, two great tracks were selected by forum members to be pressed to wax, and **Reso** and **Innerlign & Tyrant** walked off with the prize for "Curse Dub" and "1745," respectively. "Curse Dub" is a heavy, tom-laden smasher with a healthy skank while "1745" is more on the synth-echo tip. Both great, and the label is an awesome idea executed well.

Big things a' gwan for dubstep in Scandinavia at the moment. One large event is the launch of Copenhagen's Kraken Records, featuring dark, dark tracks from label boss (and Pressing Issues affiliate) **DJ2000f** (a.k.a. Obeah, Grand Denois), as well as material from artist **JSL** (a.k.a. Wolfman). 2000f has been terribly prolific in the Danish grime and drum & bass scenes for some time and now he's got Kraken's first four releases set to go. Check www.myspace.com/krakenrecordings for sound and info.

The other not-to-be-missed release from up north is the wonderful *Die!* EP from **Demonic 1**. Despite the scary names, it's actually highly slinky, danceable stuff in the vein of Search and Destroy's productions from two years ago. Demonic 1 is Mikko Seppala out of Tampere, Finland, and you can check out all the Finnish goodness at www.swaeg.org. Next up is **Aprox's** *Absinth* EP.

Great things continue to happen in Berlin, too. **Hey-O-Hansen** is "Berlin's #1 most charming Afro-alpine band." Hey now? That's right, the loose group Hey has been slipping in between dub, pop, and techno for years, and now they throw dubstep (with patois and chanteuse-ery included) in the mix. The band has managed to make four awesome singles over the past 12 months, with an original track on one side and a remix by a Berlin artist on the flip. **Karl Marx Stadt** (a.k.a. Christian of **Society Suckers**) turns "Fire" into a real dubstep stunner. "Babylon System" is on tap

for the end of the year with Lux Nigra label head **Multipara** on the remix, and a full compilation is in the works for 2007. The label is actively looking for better distro at the moment in the U.S. and the U.K.; check 'em at www.heyrec.org. (Hat tip to **DJ Screendoor** and **Tinhead** in Milwaukee for re-acquainting me with the label.)

Another Hey-O-Hansen remix is **DJ Maxximus** (he did their superb "Fly Home" remix). Definitely don't miss the "Dem All Shot" b/w "Danger" EP by **Phokus** that he's been promoting on the MG77 label. **Tinchy Stryder** and **Dirty Danger** are in top form on this one—real dubby grime.

**Monkey Steak** (Atki2 and **Hanuman**) can do no wrong. Check out everything they've got coming up: a brilliant slinky dubstep tune ("Douceur") for Bristol label Immerse; a heavy remix of **Stormfield's** "Haiku" for Combat; a jungle/breakcore/soul track ("Too Late") on an upcoming DeathSucker EP; and a hard dub/grime/grim remix of **Cardopusher's** "Keep on Truckin'" for Terminal Dusk. And speaking of Terminal Dusk, **Math Head's** outdone himself for the *Dirty Deeds* EP. It collects his four greatest dubcore/breaks tracks in one place for one unmissable assault. Epic. Legions-of-screaming-fans good.

Out of words, but for a good time, check former D&B producer Ecco's B-more guise **White Girl Lust** (myspace.com/whitegirllust). **Spank Rock** remixes and partybreaks galore. Real fun.

Photo of Omer by Morgan Howland, shot at San Jose and 23rd in San Francisco



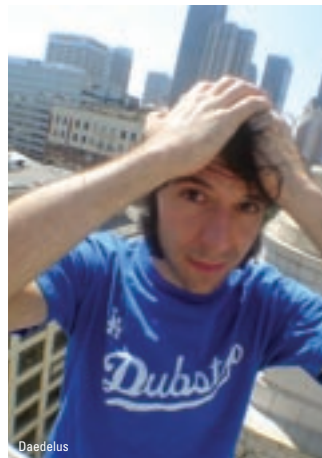
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## After Silence By Martin De Leon THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Daedelus



The Punks

Along with LSD beats, smart indie rock, and a lustful disregard for pop, destroying aesthetics has been this year's big trend. But just know that I'm following tomorrow's weirdoes around with a tape recorder, from the zany Liars to Portland's White Rainbow, because—like the world itself—experimental music will be here for a long time to come.

Like sitting in a bathtub with Björk, **Greg Davis'** "Fennel & Tangerine" uses water, grandiose strings, an accordion, and morose guitars to construct a moody moment in time. Part of Ache Records' Div/orce 7" series, the split also features **Of** (a.k.a. Loren Chasse) contributing a dark, folksy number. You also need to beg for, borrow, or quietly steal Vancouver producer **Secret Mommy's** *The Wisdom* EP (Ache). Like a drunk Matmos, Secret Mommy uses samples from when he had his wisdom teeth removed to make ADD disco and beat-up laptop punk. I'm scared.

**Home Video**, a duo from Brooklyn, drops its "Penguin" single on Defend Music, an awesome, '80s-styled Massive Attack jawb that deals in the moodiest of pop. But it's the 10-minute DFA remix by Tim Goldsworthy, with crunchy drums shaping the song into a slab of robot house, that makes it worth the price of admission.

L.A.'s **VxPx** uses unorthodox sounds so much they make Faust sound like pop. Their three-disc *Heaven is for Quitters* (Eclipse) is littered with gems like "SingSkeletonSingNaked," where drones, echoes, and feedback come together as fuzzy white noise. Party like it's the apocalypse.

Weirdo producer and hip-hop savant **Daedelus'** *Throwing a Fit* (Alpha Pup) goes cerebral and historical with samples from '40s children songs. "A Complicated Geometry," with its opera motif, sweet violins, and cut-up funk drums, is so futuristic that it makes Just Blaze sound dated.

Portland's Yarnlazer Records released a great split EP with Dublin's **Bonecloud**—a duo whose haunting, accordion-laden "Campfire" is reminiscent of the drone accordion work of Pauline Oliveros—and creepy **Ghosting**. I want to live in a world where cars bump Eno, and see a record like this crack the Billboard charts.

Fellow Northwest band **The Punks** makes gooey rock on their *Unanimous Bangers* (5RC) full-length, which sounds like Sonic Youth before they got old. Similar to the slacker quintet's solid albums, The Punks' record features eight songs of noise, Lee Ranaldo-styled guitar burps, and random yelps.

**Girl Talk**, the mash-up media darling, crushes pop history on his brilliant *Bone Hard Zaggin' 7"* on 333 Recordings. "Pure Magic" uses Kanye West and "The Humpty Dance" to beat each other up, while "LC and Lo" uses Bell Biv DeVoe and Negativland to confuse your booty.

**The Slits**, with their new three-song EP *Revenge of the Killer Slits* (S.A.F.), are back after 25 years to take on all these fake post-punk dudes. "Slits Tradition" sounds like Le Tigre's synth-pop-meets-punk tracks, which is a good thing. And though they could ease up on the reggae ("Kill Them with Love"), it's good to know that these ladies have returned.

**Xiu Xiu** friend and L.A. resident Brendan Fowler, known as **BARR**, has a forthcoming album out called *Summary* (5RC) that you should sell your children for. With the untitled first single's rapping-for-punk-kids over slow, indie rock, I think I see what next year's sound will be: noise rap.



## Leftfield Guest Reviews: Scream Club

*Life of a Heartbreaker* is leftfield booty-hop at its finest. And the ladies behind it—Scream Club's Cindy Wonderful and Sarah Adorable—know just how to get the party going, queer-electro-sex-hop-hip-pop-punk-rock-rap-style. The title track pitches up Bronski Beat's classic "Smalltown Boy" and throws on tough-and-tender hyper-speed raps, while others, like the electro-jumpin' "Fine as Fuck," feature femmeC Peaches. Not surprisingly, the girls met in a porn shop in Olympia, WA and immediately forged a partnership (on more than just the musical front) that would bring their hot-and-sleazy sounds to kids all across the country. When they're not busy making music videos for *Life of a Heartbreaker*, touring the US, or working on music for their home label, Crunks Not Dead, you might catch at least one of them DJing as Click the Mouse. Here's what they're rocking tonight. *Ken Taylor*  
[www.screamclub.com](http://www.screamclub.com), [www.crunksnotdead.com](http://www.crunksnotdead.com)

### MOON TRENT OLD SCHOOL DANCE (FROM QUILT)

timmi-kat/US/CD  
I'm into this track. It's a mellow yet dancey song with sexy and clever lyrics. It's what might happen if the Scissor Sisters had a little brother that was dating Justin Timberlake and was into Fischerspooner when that was cool. Perfect to listen to while getting ready to go out, and for any DJ to play throughout the night. He says he's a dancing queen and I believe it. *Sarah Adorable*

### LANGUAGE-ART OVERCOME IT (FROM THE BABY)

Icabod/CAN/CD  
I would classify this track as folksy—not slow 'n' soulful folksy, but fun folksy. It's upbeat and positive—not to dance to, but to tap your foot to. Her style of singing is almost like rapping; it's fast and unique. For not being super-into this particular genre of music, I like it. It stands out and the Language-Art people are good at what they do. *Sarah Adorable*

### OZONE AXIOM OZONE AXIOM

Oliver Sutton/US/CD  
West Coast vs. East Coast beef doesn't matter much when you have to worry about alien invasions. London's DJ Kluster and rappers Katastrophe (from S.F.) and Aggracyst team up on this track to give you the rap equivalent of a dark and mysterious book on tape. So suspenseful you'll be glued to the speaker in anticipation. *Cindy Wonderful*



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**Read The Label**  
By Jesse "Drosco" Serwer  
HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



Consequence



Young Buck

Time to reflect on the year that was, and what a forgettable year it was. Okay, there was the Mets' return to the postseason, and the motherfuckin' *Wire's* back on HBO, we got two last gifts from the departing genius **J Dilla** (*Donuts* and *The Shining*) but, other than that, it was pretty slim pickings.

*Hell Hath No Fury* (Jive/Re-Up) from VA soldiers **Clipse** is the year's best straight-up rap album, and it ain't even out as I type this. I doubt this sees shelves before year's end, given its history and threat of violence against the Jive Records staff, but at press time it's pegged to December 12, so get with the program. Another platter that's being pushed back 'til '07 is **Federation's** *It's Whateva* (Warner Bros.), my choice for best-produced album in '06. *It's Whateva* is producer Rick Rock's *The Chronic*, and an all-out monster, as evidenced by current single "18 Dummy."

**Five Deez's** early winter release, *Kommunicator* (Rapster), was the tripped-out mind-fuck record that really got me this year, and "Fugg That" b/w "BMW" was a dope lead 12". Give it up again to Dilla's *Donuts* (Stones Throw)—easily the best producer record and instrumental album in some time. I had this on when I fell asleep the night Dilla passed away, and it's given it an extra-eeerie quality since then.

Been waiting all year for some underground joint to come out of nowhere and blow me away, but I'm going to begrudgingly declare **E-40** featuring **Keak Da Sneak's** "Tell Me When To Go" (Warner Bros.) as the year's best radio single. It's either that or this new **Too Short** track "Keep Bouncing" (Jive), featuring **Snoop** and **Will.i.Am**. Will.i.Am?! You know this year was wack if I'm considering calling a record with that clown (he also produced it) one of the year's best. But that "boobies bouncing on my head" line is so bad it's kinda good. **K-Salaam's** "Victory (feat. **Mos Def** and **Sizzla**)" b/w "Fallen Soldierz" (Shining Star Music) was another winner I never got to properly pay tribute to in these pages. The upstart producer from Queens (by way of Minnesota) brings it on one of the best hip-hop/dancehall hybrids in a minute.

I still don't fully get the hype about Houston but my choice '06 DJ mix, **DJ Ayres & JD's** *Houston For Dummies*, breaks it down into undeniable terms: the best H-Town classics (like UGK's "Front, Back and Side To Side") in one dope, immaculately mixed platter. **Saigon's** Gangsta Grillz mixtape, *Welcome To Saigon*, was easily the year's best street album, and, like the Clipse discs last year, better than all but a handful of actual albums this year.

I've always thought **Young Buck's** twang was the G-Unit's lone bright spot, and the man from Cashville's come through with a pair of quality street albums (*Chronic 2006* and *Welcome Too The Traphouse*) in anticipation of his second LP, *Buck the World* (G-Unit/Interscope).

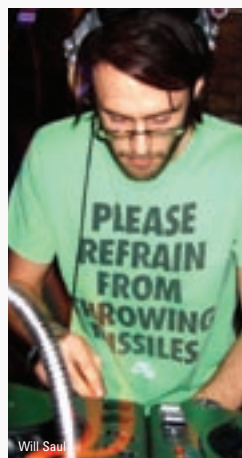
I don't get to watching too many videos (YouTube, for me, is a means to watch old ones) but the most amusing spot I've caught this year belongs to **Jean Grae's** "The Jam." I don't believe this track has actually been released, but director Monihan Monihan's hilarious *House Party* redux is seriously on point. YouTube it.



**En Tu Casa**  
By Nick Chacona  
HOUSEKEEPING, FROM TECH TO MINIMAL TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



Jesse Rose



Will Saul

Since its inception 10 years ago, London's Freerange label has never had a problem with consistency, and the same goes for two of their forthcoming releases. The *Solar System* EP from France's Stanislas Renouf (under the **Mowgly** moniker) has distinct influences of both Detroit and West London. **Domu's** alter ego **Zoltar** reworks the title track to further emphasize the broken beat connection. **Shur-I-Kan**, known for his thoughtful, melodic journeys through downtempo and broken beat, is responsible for the *Future Fantasy* EP. The two original tracks, "Fantasy" and "Future," are solid, dreamy filter-house excursions that hark back to the mid-'90s sounds of DNH and Naked Music, respectively.

In the vocal arena, **Colonel Abrams** is back on the scene with a new self-named label, and a 12" entitled "Just When You Thought." Three mixes, which range from deep to pumping, plus an instrumental, will satisfy fans new and old. NYC's **Marlon D** and vocalist **Stephanie Renee** team up for the surefire Shelter stormer *I'm A Believer* on Jellybean Soul. **Charles Webster**, the mastermind behind such projects as *Love* from San Francisco and *Presence*, has focused his attention on his Miso imprint as of late. Up next on the schedule is a crisp single by **Rebecca Pidgeon**. *Learn To Pray* comes complete with a hyper-sultry downtempo mix, a no-nonsense house dub that's been garnering serious club attention on promo, and a mix by Webster and production pal **Martin Iverson** (a.k.a. **Atjazz**) under their new alias **Version**.

On the tech-house tip, Swede **Martinez**—whose work is usually found on Audiomatique, Get Physical, or his own label Out of Orbit—lends his talents to **Silicone Soul's** *Darkroom Dubs*. *The Sunshine Stalker* EP is cold, calculated, and precise, the kind of full-on digital production that Martinez is known for.

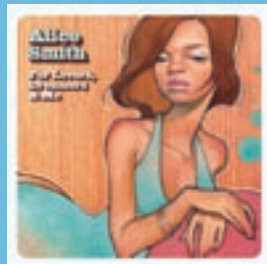
**Will Saul's** Simple Records continues to push the envelope with each release, and the upcoming joint from bounce-house maven **Jesse Rose** under his **Content** guise keeps pushing. "It's So..." features Rose's penchant for tight, bouncing drums, bleeps, and dancehall sounds. Coupled with a bassline that climbs and descends, the original mix is pure energy. Remix duty belongs to Saul himself, offering emotive yet spaced-out Detroit-styled chords, and a massive pitch bend thrown in for good measure.

For those who weren't around for the original Chicago-era Prescription Records releases, the label has recently launched Prescription Classic, a series of reissues of some of the most sought-after tracks of their catalog. Next up is *Hip to Be Disillusioned* by **Chez & Trent**. It would be many a punter's dream to have Ron and Damier back together for some studio action, but for now we can all once again enjoy the magic that they captured by uniquely melding the sounds of N.Y., Chicago, and Detroit. It sounds as fresh today as it did in 1994.

And last but certainly not least, **DJ Pope**, house vet from Baltimore, will release an absolutely stunning set of tunes on *Traxx from the Vatican Vol. 9* EP (Poji). On the a, "In the Beginning" is a brilliant concoction of samba rhythms, West Coast gangsta rap synth whistles, and snippets of the classic **Chuck Roberts** speech/track "My House." On the flip, "My Vibes" is a deep, pumping vibraphone house jam sure to end up in the setlists of many house heavy-hitters.

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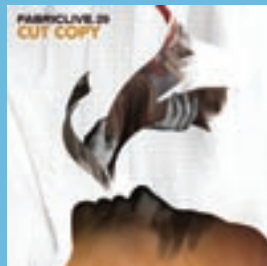
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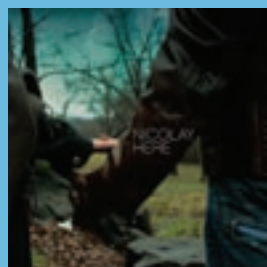
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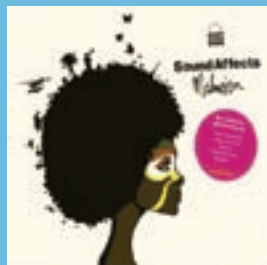
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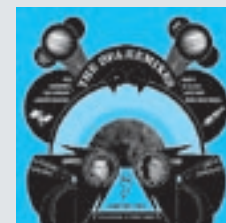
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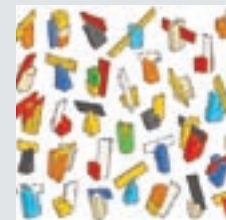
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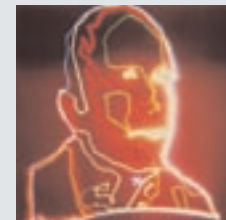
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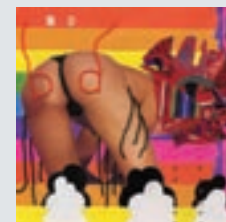
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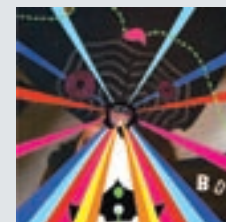
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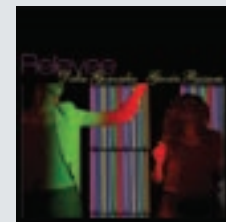
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BLACK DICE smiling off



DELIA GONZALEZ & GAVIN RUSSOM days of mars



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**Bubble Metropolis**  
By **M. Tronik**  
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Audion



Kate Simko

As I type this, I am sitting in a room surrounded by boxes, shards of ripped cardboard, and milk crates overflowing with records. Moving is a bitch, particularly for the vinyl addict. Can someone put me in touch with Richie Hawtin's interns? I think I have some digitizing that needs doing!

Imagine men moving heavy boxes up steep steps, hour after hour, and you'll get a sense of what's happening on **Brian Sanhaji's** "Beta V1.0.0" remix 12" (Enable Recordings). The **Andre Walters** remix is shuffling, bombastic, incessant techno, and **The Advent** remix is straight-up wall-banging!

Vancouver's **Male Model Machine** is moving asses all over Canada. Check out their MP3-only release "Electro is Played Out" b/w "Acid is Played Out" for a slice of sleazy West Coast electro-techno at [www.myspace.com/malemodelmachine](http://www.myspace.com/malemodelmachine).

Bpitch Control's **Kiki** and **Lee Van Dowski** have teamed up for a double-sided 12" collabo. Both artists supply strong efforts; the two tunes progress with jangly pads and rhythms, kind of like ants building new colonies. And no, it isn't trance. Or is it?

Definitely not to be confused with techno's melodic and meandering stepchild is **D.I.M's** "Sysiphos" 12" (Turbo). This two-track single is tough, dirty-bass groove music for cargo truck drivers in space who deliver your stuff upside down—but for some reason it doesn't matter. I'm not a big fan of the hook on the b-side cut, "Noize," but it still works in an old-school techno kind of way.

Maybe during the unpacking and arranging process, **Kate Simko's** *Strumm EP* (Kupei Musika) will provide solid accompaniment. It's a fine slab of delicate, deep, and thoughtful minimal techno. Imagine painting your new room in a dark blue or brown tone to the title track.

Finding you need more room to breathe? **Audion's** *Mouth to Mouth EP* (Spectral) has finally been released upon the masses. This pseudo-acid builder must get its name from the fact that it could resuscitate any dancefloor. Bang this one too much in the apartment and one could soon find oneself searching for a change of address.

Relocating is always stressful, which is why **Bangana's** "Skirk" (Heya HiFi) did wonders to calm my nerves. Ironic, considering "skirk" is the Swedish word for "scream." Nevertheless, I found the pulsating bass arrangement interesting and engaging.

Give your monitors a sound check in your new apartment with **Evan Marc's** excellent *Ekoshok EP* (Sentient Sound). Spacious, not-too-minimal, but still groovin', this two-track combo is top-notch. The title track has been my favorite gig-opener of late.

Disco and techno are two of my sweet spots when it comes to dance music, and **Sideshow's** *Philly Soundworks* (Aus Music) melds the two perfectly. This isn't cheese-ball cut-up stuff, trust. The Lee Jones mix is the cut to rock so find it, love it, and play it for your peeps at the housewarming.

And finally, *Refaded* (Festplatten), the remixes from **Andi Teichmann's** fantastic *Fades* full-length, gets the supreme treatment from dubmasters **Hannes Teichmann** and **Ada**. The standouts are Hannes' "They Don't Care" remix and Ada's version of "Tape." Predictably, this new single inspired me to dig out the album from which the originals came. Unfortunately, after much searching, I realized that it was included in a crate sent to a storage space miles away!



**Techno Guest Reviews:**  
**Mossa**

Montreal's techno and house scene is, in a very big way, like Berlin's. Producer/DJs like Mossa (a.k.a. Jeremy Petrus) churn out tracks on a daily basis in their dirt-cheap apartments, run their own labels, and release music on friends' imprints like Mutek, Mo's Ferry, and countless others. Mossa runs the Complot label—though its output is small at this stage, collaborations with Dafluke, Jacob London, and Pheek (basically leftovers from each producer's hard drive reheated and spiced up by friends) are no less capable of melting Montreal's dancefloors. Speaking of dancefloors, if you find yourself in French Canada you probably won't have much trouble finding Mossa and friends DJing, especially during Mutek. For the time being, seek out *Some Eat It Raw*, his new full-length on France's Circus Company. Better yet, sneak a peek into his record bag. *Derek Grey*  
[www.complot.ca](http://www.complot.ca)

**TAKUYA MORITA**

**EMBODY**

Frankie/FRA/12

Frankie Records strikes again with this sweet four-tracker from Japanese producer Takuya Morita, who has a few releases on Morris Audio. The *Embody EP* takes us into choppy land, where quirky samples and bleepy syncopation rules. The grooves are amusingly catchy and full of swing. Lovers of the glitch, this one's for you. *Mossa*

**SAMIM**

**DO YOU SEE THE LIGHT**

Circus Company/FRA/12

Another great EP from the Circus, with Samim on board. Keeping his soulful touch, Samim's tracks are filled with sparkling sounds and some dancefloor appeal. Wild snares, bumpin' basslines, and fluid textures are there to make us shake our rump. Even when he goes down dark avenues, there is a flickering light that keeps the funk in you alive and kickin'! *Mossa*

**MIKE SHANNON**

**TACTILE BLUE**

Cynosure/CAN/12

Mike Shannon has always kept his promise to deliver the goods. His music is unique, homogenous, and refined. Dirtiness is at its best here, with low-res processing, deep, shimmering melodies, and breaks that remind you that the sun is coming up again. Shannon really knows how to use that swing knob and provides colored flashes of classic techno rhythms. *Mossa*

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## Apocalypse Wow By Roy Dank

TRAVERSING TIME AND SPACE IN SEARCH OF  
ODDBALL DANCE GOODIES



Darshan Jesrani



Prins Thomas

In keeping with the fine tradition of the rest of this here issue, I've decided to push about my favorite cuts of 2006—no particular rhyme or reason, just whatever struck my fancy!

I said it last go 'round (issue #101), and I'll say it again: **Joakim's** remix of **Antena's** "Camino Del Sol" on Permanent Vacation is easily the best remix of the year. What I didn't get a chance to say earlier is just how damn good "I Wish You Were Gone," his original 12" for Versatile, is. Wow! Also check the recently released killer "Drumtrax," and keep your tongue waggin' for the full-length next year.

**Padded Cell** made their mark this year with "Are You Anywhere?" taking punk-funk to dizzying new heights this past spring, and, in the process, confirming DC Recordings' status as one-of-if-not-the-most-compelling labels in dance music today. New York killed it in the Oh-Sick, what with **Brennan Green's** slo-mo chugger "Little Ease" on his freshly launched Chinatown imprint, and **Nick Chacona's** double-header of "Through the Door" on 20:20 Vision, and the re-release of "Band Practice" on Hector Works.

The criminally underrated **In Flagranti** came through with some serious heat this past year, both for their own Codek label and for Gamma. Also destined for greater success in the new year is Cali's **Michoacan**, whose *Play Your Part* EP on Bear Entertainment is a banger and then some.

Norwegian disko continued to make its presence felt with a seemingly nonstop barrage of releases throughout the year. A short list would include **Todd Terje's** floor-filling mix of **Lindström's** "Another Station," **Prins Thomas' solo** outing "Fehrara," (not to mention his remix work as **Major Swellings**), Lindström's remix of **Telex's** "Do Worry," **Magnus International's** debut single on Full Pupp, and "Sykkelsesong (Goa Club Live)" from the super-duo themselves, Lindström & Prins Thomas. Did I say short list?

Edits played quite a considerable role on the new-vinyl front in 2006, continuing to spread disco love the world over. While many continue to opt for merely splicing and dicing familiar '70s faves, the more exciting folks, such as the Must and Mindless Boogie camps, **Soft Rocks**, **Das Etwas**, and the Editions Disco label dared to be different.

On the remix front, plenty of noteworthy peeps: Among them, myriad epic reworks (**Delia & Gavin**, **Goldfrapp**, **Rhythm & Sound**) courtesy of the man himself, the inimitable **Carl Craig**; **Rub-N-Tug's**, um, rub of **Zero 7's** "Futures," comin' on like some twisted, Balearic paean with sunny vibes galore; and the London-based label **Tiny Sticks** dropping some pretty fuckin' fantastic versions of **Dondolo** from the likes of **Hot Chip**, **Brennan Green**, and **Shit Robot**, respectively—all of which proffered very different kinds of dance. New disco upstarts **Escort** scored with a mix of their "Starlight" by none other than **Darshan Jesrani** of **Metro Area** fame.

2006 sure was a helluva year as far as not-so-easily-classifiable dance music goes. Shitloads of hot singles, remixes, and edits, edits, and more edits. Here's to more fine outings in the new year!



## Down-beat Diaspora By Rico "Superbizzee" Washington

GETTING YOU UP ON THE SHARPEST SOUL,  
FUNK, AND R&B



Tony Allen



Eddie Hazel (Photo courtesy of Warner Bros)

Guess what? I got some stone junk for your funk jones! Right on time, as usual! So pick it up, put it in, and press play! So what if the 2006 World Cup games ended in a sobering coup by Italy? So what if you lost your entire 401k banking on France? Who the hell gives a damn? At least you can still shake your ass to some finger-poppin' football funk thanks to *The Football EP* (Compost). Featuring dope-ass old school relics by **Gino Washington**, **Acres of Grass**, and **Harvey Scales & Seven Sounds**, this 12" slab is sure to groove your football blues away!

Rhino is charging it to the funk game once again with *What It Is! Funky Soul & Rare Grooves 1967-1977*. Their most recent vault dig has culminated in a four-disc treasure trunk of soul n' funk, showcasing gems by folks like **Little Sister**, **Baby Huey & the Baby Sitters**, **Eddie Hazel**, and **Black Heat**. Complete with an 81-page booklet featuring track-by-track liner notes, vintage flicks, and a forward by **Oliver Wang**, this boxed set should sit well with novices and music snobs alike.

Anybody up on the UK scene should already know about "Rehab" by **Amy Winehouse**. While this could very well be Whitney Houston's anthem, it's actually the lead single from Amy's sophomore joint, *Back In Black* (Island UK). The best import you'll never hear about. Meanwhile, following her feature on **DJ Jazzy Jeff's** *The Soul Mixtape* last year, **Valencia Robinson** is making plans to put Memphis back on the soul map with her EP, *Soul Searchin'* (www.myspace.com/ValenciaRobinson). Don't sleep.

Venerable soul vet **Spanky Wilson** is at it again. Laying vocals on last year's **Quantic** single "Don't Joke With a Hungry Man" didn't do it for her. She just couldn't leave well enough alone! Her new single, "I'm Thankful" (Ubiquity), is funky as a

donkey! And if you think she's cuttin' up on that, wait 'til you hear the full album. Should you luck upon a copy of *Blow To My Soul: 16 Garage Funk Hits* (Seidr) at your local indie record spot, cop it! Aside from the hardcore porno cover, this joint packs a super-duper sucker punch of rare soul and funk from a gang of folks you prolly ain't never heard of!

If you know about P&P Records or PAP Records, you know about **Patrick Adams**. Either way, you should know about *Master of the Masterpiece: The Very Best of Patrick Adams* (Traffic Ent). Celebrating the greatest contributions from his songwriting and production genius, this two-disc set features throwback cuts from **Black Ivory**, **Donna McGhee**, **Phreek**, **Musique**, and more.

Word has it that **Cee-Lo Green** is in the process of further unleashing his closet freak on all y'all along with **Plantlife's** **Jack Splash** under the tag **The Heart Attack**. Though two tracks, "Gangsta Boogie" and "Right Now," are gettin' major play, details on the project are under wraps. Stay tuned.

In response to the genocide crisis in Darfur, Modiba Productions issues *ASAP: The Afrobeat Sudan Aid Project* (modiba.net). This 12-track benefit compilation features cuts from artists like **Wunmi**, **Antibalas**, and **Tony Allenw**. All proceeds will benefit the Save the Children foundation. So far, they've raised over \$130,000 for the cause. Let's kick it up a notch. Until next time, keep that in your pocket.



### Rub-N-Tug fabric 30 Available Now

'fabric 30' is the new mix from New York's premier party-starters, Rub-N-Tug. Capturing the sweat-stained spirit of their incendiary DJ sets at the London club, it's a typically twisted selection of spaced-out sounds, including tracks from Claude VonStroke, Micky and Sir Draw - good time vibes and late night beats. Let's get busy!



### Stanton Warriors FABRICLIVE.30 Available Now

Breakbeat heroes the Stanton Warriors get down and dirty on FABRICLIVE.30, a booty shaking mix featuring Spank Rock, Booka Shade, Freeform Five and several of their own fiery remixes. Beats bounce and basslines throb throughout this bumping collection.



### Marco Carola fabric 31 Available 01.23.07

Fabric 31 sees Italian techno legend Marco Carola conjure some deep, luscious grooves from the widest expanses of the minimal techno genre. From the swagger of Alex Smoke's infectious tech-house, the stomping roll of Audio Werner, to Paco Osuna's bumping freeform cyber-funk, this slow seduction is a hot late-night soundscape stripped down to the bare essentials.



### The Glimmers FABRICLIVE.31 Available 01.23.07

Belgian duo The Glimmers prove their affinity with artistic freedom on a vivid, alluring mix that defiantly breaks free from all musical trends and restraints. Included are some of the most influential, under-appreciated, forgotten, essential, interesting and cutting-edge beat pioneers. Sway to Black Slate's reggae-tinted drums, tread to electro-acoustic legend Pierre Henry, break to a Freeez classic and shake to Padded Cell's techy take on Mekon, all within the space of one disc.

Forthcoming artists in the series: Luke Slater, Röyksopp, Ricardo Villalobos, Krafty Kuts, Justice, James Murphy.

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## Lucky 13 By Toph One

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at [www.fabric8.com/redwine](http://www.fabric8.com/redwine). Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.



Voice



Ismael Claremont and Jeremy Cowen



Tommy Guerrero

*"Oh how the years seem to fly by..."* —D.I. *"Richard Hung Himself"*

Ah, the holidays—that glorious mix of glee, melancholy, family strife, and drunken reunions with friends. I like to treat myself to a long train ride into the mountains, and spend a few nights alone, downing brandy and contemplating the year(s) past with a cat wrapped around my leg and Johnny Cash on the stereo. The girls, the goals, the fun, and hard times. We ride our bikes out to Ocean Beach on Christmas Day, think about life, and make our peace with ourselves; a solitary moment before we jump into another year of sleep deprivation and liver damage.

### 1. FORRO IN THE DARK BONFIRES OF SAO JOAO

Nublu/US/CD  
I fully expect to be decorating the tree and dancing to "Asa Branca" with my mom on Christmas Eve.

### 2. BRIGHTBLACK MORNING LIGHT S/T

Matador/US/CD  
How two vagabonds in the redwoods of NorCal managed to record such a masterpiece of earthy delights is beyond me, but this may be the finest moment of 2006—no joke. A definite groove threads between the songs like variations on a theme. This may be the most beautiful, laid-back music I have ever heard.

### 3. TOMMY GUERRERO

*FROM THE SOIL TO THE SOUL*  
Quannum/US/CD  
El Viejo Pollo is back, rocking the electric a bit harder than before, but still deep in the groove and funky as ever. "The Under Dog" and "Let Me In Let Me Out" stand out, but "Just Ain't Me" is TG at his best: an easy guitar over a rolling bassline and sparse drums. My man.

### 4. DJS B-CAUSE & MAX KANE NIGHT OF THE REMIX VOL.1

4OneFunk/US/CD  
I tried to warn y'all about the 4OneFunk DJs, and here they are again, deep in the "re-scrapes," showing all toy mash-up DJs the real deal. This here is 31 remixes, sometimes mashed three layers deep, and all mixed together like it should be. True Bay hotness.

### 5. INFAMY

Image-Paladin/US/DVD  
From *Scratch* director Doug Pray comes this documentary on six of the top graffiti artists in the U.S.—Jase, Enem, Toomer, Saber, Claw, and Earsnot, plus the militant L.A. buffer Joe Connolly. The interviews are interesting and pretty damn funny at times, and there's some dope footage, for sure. I'd be quite happy finding this under my tree.

### 6. TOPR CHEAP LAUGHS FOR DEAD COMEDIANS

indie/US/CD  
The Lord Wino TopR is an unrepentant drunk and thug graffiti writer. He also tells a mean tale on the microphone. God love him.

### 7. KASABIAN "EMPIRE"

RCA/US/10  
Depending on your set needs, this is a sweet little slab of wax. The a-side is a rocky joint with dope keyboard horns, while the flip remix by Jagz Kooner is a pulsing electro killer perfect for those "strobelight" sets.

### 8. FUNKY TRANSPORT & JONEE Q FEAT. LOLA "HOW CAN U (BE SO FAR AWAY)?"

Eight-Tracks/US/12  
Another stomping strobelight jam, courtesy of a Q-Burns remix, while Atnarko & Sen-Sei drop the sexy Prince vibes on the flip.

### 9. VOICE GUMBO

Public Transit/CAN/CD  
After collabos with Zero DB and Visioneers (BBE), this talented New Orleans-hurricane escapee and mother of two somehow found the time to pull together these 15 bumping joints. Marc Mac's "Total Eclipse," Moonstarr's "Best Boy," and particularly the spacey "1000 Summers" by Superdelic highlight the amazing production.

### 10. VARIOUS ARTISTS A BOSTON STATE OF MIND

Commonwealth/US/CD  
Boston shines bright on this new comp. Ripshop and MP2 tear up their respective tracks, as does Mic Stylez on "Bringin' It Back (feat. Esoteric)" and Bomshot with "Bang Bang." Speaking of Boston, don't sleep on Akrobatik's latest, "A to the K (feat. B-Real)" on Fat Beats.

### 11. OH NO EXODUS INTO UNHEARD RHYTHMS

Stones Throw/US/CD  
Unlikely hippie/jazz/funk/showtunes legend Galt MacDermot gets mined for beats in this Oh No-produced project that yields some bad-ass results. Check "To Be an MC (feat. K Jay)" and Vast Aire's "No Aire," plus tracks with Wordsworth and MED.

### 12. K-THE-I??? BROKEN LOVE LETTER

Mush/US/CD  
Maybe we just share the same take on women and relationships, but I'd like to sit down with K-the-I??? over a bottle of Crown Royal.

### LUCKY 13. BPM RECORDS—R.I.P.

S.F./record shop  
For 16 years, BPM was arguably the epicenter of Bay Area dance culture. Props to Jeremy, Ismael, and Victor for all the years, vinyl, and Heinekens. You are missed.



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XLR8R *write*



Wolf Eyes: Mike Connelly, Nate Young, John Arnold



## IN THE STUDIO: WOLF EYES

Michigan's wildest band creates sweet noise out of delay, reverb, and... crab samples?

WORDS: KEN TAYLOR PHOTO: DOUG COOMBE

Five years ago, I emailed Wolf Eyes to request some of their records for my college radio show. In the package that erstwhile member Aaron Dilloway sent, wedged between a hand-scrawled note and hand-colored Nautical Almanac and Wolf Eyes vinyl, were a bunch of ads for products from Korg and Roland, likely torn from a music gear trade mag. But what was embedded on *Wolf Eyes* hardly resembled something made in a crisp and clean studio on the latest pro-audio offerings. Rather, the shrieking vocals, subsonic pulses, and metal-on-metal scrape-squeals seemed like they could only come from one place: a gritty basement (in Detroit? Ann Arbor?) filled with ripped-apart synths, radios, and ghosts of technology past. Wolf Eyes' *raison d'être* hasn't veered much from those days, but their inimitable sound certainly has gained them a following; their latest, *Human Animal* (their second LP for Sub Pop, the first since Dilloway departed the band) has got even the most conservative of indie rock hipsters singing the praises of dirty noise. We tapped Wolf Eyes co-founder Nate Young, and current member John Olson, to give us a glimpse into what makes the wolf really howl.

**Wolf Eyes' *Human Animal* (Sub Pop) is out now. [www.wolfeyes.net](http://www.wolfeyes.net), [www.subpop.com](http://www.subpop.com)**

### DOES WOLF EYES HAVE A REGULAR STUDIO, PER SE?

John Olson: No, we've got a computer with Pro Tools on it; that's it. We used to have a studio, but now it's more just a room... nothing fancy at all. *Dread* was recorded off the back of Nate's amp, direct to MiniDisc in one take. [For *Human Animal*] we laid down almost all the tracks on our home studio, and brought them to [Brendan Gillen of Ectomorph] to help us beef them up.

### A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THAT WHAT YOU GUYS DO IS SORT OF RANDOM.

JO: There's nothing random about it.

### IS THERE A GOAL IN MIND?

JO: We were like, "We wanna write a slow jam," so we took some acoustic drum bits and pieces and crab sounds, and we made it into "Rationed Rot." It's all homogenized sounds, kind of reorganized.

### DID YOU SAY "CRAB SOUNDS"?

JO: Yeah, they were from old Folkways records and sound effects records and things like that.

### DO YOU USE A LOT OF SAMPLES?

JO: I wouldn't necessarily call them samples. It's more like "needed" sound. We're not really around crabs and stuff like that, but we'll crinkle cans to try to get a sound we want. But, like, the basis of the rhythm for "Rationed Rot" is a recording I have of a dog with heart

murmurs. But we're not into it for the environmental or humane things; we just liked the sound.

### FOR THE LIVE SHOW, DO YOU LOOK FOR THE STURDIEST GEAR?

Nate Young: [We use] the cheapest stuff possible. We use a lot of Behringer mixers and Radio Shack mixers, and that is actually a lot of our setup: feedback run through a ton of different mixers.

### YOU MAKE A LOT OF GEAR, RIGHT?

NY: One thing I always get a lot of sounds from in the studio is just an average radio, rewired so that it doesn't pick up any stations. It just kinda picks up a shortwave signal.

### THE TYPICAL BRANDS YOU FIND IN OTHER STUDIOS IN YOUR ARSENAL, TOO?

NY: Not really. The fellas have been laying off the effects and the pedals lately, just kinda dealing more with rawer sounds, like tape manipulation and mic'ing pieces of metal. Name brands have kinda dropped off our map [laughs]. I have, like, a DOD delay that... I don't prefer it—I just think it's easier. I prefer a nice, thick tape delay but, as far as traveling and just out of utility, I think it's fine. When we record, we fine-tune it and maybe get rid of standard plug-ins that we're using for a slap back and put a nice reverb on there or something.

### SO YOU DO USE DIGITAL EFFECTS...

NY: Yeah, we definitely implement them, just as a utility, and then take them away. And then we'll go into a studio that has nicer effects, nice tape delays, and spring reverbs and stuff. What else we use is that Bi-Filter from Electro-Harmonix. That's something we use on the drums a lot to get it real nice and thick.

### WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MUSICAL TOOL IN YOUR STUDIO?

NY: Personally, it's just my oscillators, my electronics. I enjoy those the most. Though recently I've been playing just a spring reverb that's been extremely effective.

### WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN A WOLF EYES STUDIO SESSION?

NY: Probably a liquor store within walking distance.

In Wolf Eyes' studio (clockwise from top right): Electro-Harmonix Bi-Filter, DOD delay pedal, Pro Tools mixing screen, Behringer mixer





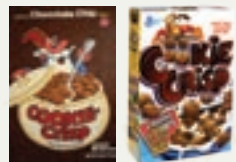
## ARTIST TIPS: FLYING LOTUS

L.A.-based instrumental hip-hop sculptor Flying Lotus (a.k.a. Steve Ellison) is a concept man first, gear hound second. His opus, *1983*, is entirely indicative of that recording philosophy, and you'll hear how his eerie, electro-fractured sounds are hardly the product of Guitar Center-studio foolery. Instead, they come from a place of mental organization, far away from the world of gear shops and plug-in downloads. Here, Ellison walks us through some important components in making a Flying Lotus recording. *Derek Grey*

Flying Lotus' *1983* is out now on Plug Research. [www.plugresearch.com](http://www.plugresearch.com), [www.myspace.com/flyinglotus](http://www.myspace.com/flyinglotus).

### 1. CONCEPT COOKIE CRISP

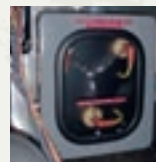
A strong concept is the most important thing in creating a record. When you can listen to it and see a whole movie in your head, that's what separates an instrumental album from a beat tape. When I made *1983*, there were a bunch of tracks that were in the early drafts that



1



2



3



4



5

didn't make it because they just sounded like tracks for rappers, and that's not really the sound I look for when I produce my own albums.

### 2. TOYS AND SHAKER THINGIES

I'm not really a gear junkie, and I don't really think it matters if you use hardware or software, but I think if you are making an album you should try and have some consistency with the gear, especially the way you monitor your sounds. After I make a track, I like to burn it to CD and take a ride and hear how it hits. Even if it's some mellow, folk-sounding shit, it has to knock. EQ and compression go a long way, especially for cats on the MPC.

### 3. FLUX CAPACITOR 88

Before saying, "This track is so dope, it's gonna go on the album," I like to take some time away from it and see how I feel about it in a few months. If it's gonna get released, I gotta love it—it's gonna have my name on it

forever. I'm that guy who can't hear his own work from a month ago. I'll always hear something wrong with it because I go through different phases in my sound.

### 4. GREEN TEA POWER

I'm not much of a coffee person, but when I wake up and the sun is shining through the window, I'll get a lil' bit of green tea and get to work. They say you'll live a lil' bit longer, too, by drinking this stuff. I'll live forever... *Bwa ha ha ha!*

### 5. HEARING-AID CLICK

When I have a sketch of an album, I'll be really picky with the people I let hear it in its concept phase. They have to be in the same chamber of sound that I'm into at that moment, so you can really see where you stand and who you your audience is. If I can get the people who like beat music, that's good. But if I get the people who like "weird" music, then I know I'm headed in the right direction.

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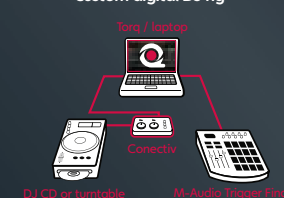


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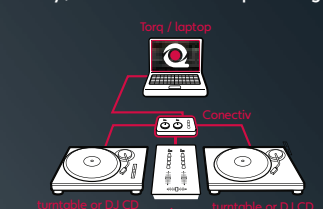
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## CONTROLLED KAOSS

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The **Kaoss Pad** has garnered an impressive lineup of devotees, including Funkstörung, Radiohead, Brian Eno, and El-P. The KP3 delivers more of the touchy-feely goodness the device is known for: 128 effects programs (with new, clatter-like grain shifter and decimator), along with drum loops, synth sounds, and a built-in vocoder. Your finger dances around an 8x8 matrix this time, allowing quick-fingered users to sequence beats and slice up live samples. Oh, and it looks stupid fresh. Just one major let-down: Korg still hasn't seen fit to add balanced jacks, meaning you're once again forced to make do with phono ins and outs. *Evan Shamoon*



## KEYED UP

**Propellerheads Reason Pianos ReFill Software Library**  
MSRP: \$129; [www.propellerheads.se](http://www.propellerheads.se)

Whether you're a novice or virtuoso, black and white piano keys offer a vast compositional playground to roam and explore. To satiate your inner Elton John, tons of companies have made expensive, RAM-sucking soft-synth piano plug-ins. Most are designed with soundtrack studio composers in mind, not us bedroom Beethovens. Propellerheads, on the other hand, has adapted its excellent Combinator device to create the affordable and fantastic-sounding **Reason Pianos**. Combinator (which takes synths, effects, and EQs and pre-stacks them) is the central tool in Props' playable piano collection—these are not loops. You get three impressively multi-mic'd instruments (Steinway D, Steinway K, and Yamaha C7) plus over 90 prearranged patches. All 10 mic placements are adjustable, as is room ambience, hammer noise, and compression. I recommend at least a 49-weighted-key controller to really two-hand this set properly. Works via ReWire in most host programs. Unleash the ivory! *Tomas Palermo*

## WORM-FREE APPLE

**Apple iPod nano Digital Music Player**  
MSRP: \$149-\$249; [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

There's just no out-designing Apple, and the second gen of the **iPod nano** simply furthers the cause. Sleeker, and available in a much larger array of colors than the first round, nano v.2's anodized aluminum shell is still ridiculously light and razor-thin. But what's inside is just as important: extended battery life of up to 24 hours per charge, a handy new search function to shorten the hunt for that poorly named track title that starts with a string of symbols, and an 8GB drive (available only on the black version; other colors come as 2GB and 4GB). The 1.5-inch display is hotter than ever, and with Cover Flow now packed into iTunes, easy access to album art makes the nano friendly to even visually oriented crate diggers. Yes, it's still packaged with those stock ear buds; get over it. *Ken Taylor*



## PIECE OF CAKE

**Cakewalk Sonar 6 Producer Edition**  
MSRP: \$619; [www.cakewalk.com](http://www.cakewalk.com)

If you're a music producer on the PC, Cakewalk's **Sonar** should have been on your radar—err, sonar—for years now. The Producer Edition of Sonar 6 takes all the hefty digital audio workstation goodness of previous versions, bulks up with over a hundred new features, including terrific new VST instruments, and tosses in 64-bit support for kicks. It'll take years (or at least until version 7) to find all the new features, but an infinitely customizable interface and great external controller interaction via "ACT" (Active Controller Technology) top the list. It requires a powerful system, but if you're a semi-pro, it's worth it. *Rob Geary*

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MIX IT UP

**Mackie d.2 Premium VCA Mixer w/FireWire Option**  
**MSRP: 779.99 (+ \$319.99 with FireWire card); www.mackie.com**

With the **d.2**, Mackie has dreamt up a wonderful two-channel DJ mixer that is both forward-thinking and easy to use. This sturdily built unit has a smooth crossfader and attractive, bright-blue LEDs on its console, and its crisp sound ensures that your mix-tapes will sound chunky from the get-go. Unfortunately, the version we received wasn't fully ready for the road test, as I had to install a small outboard FireWire card into an open port (ie. inserting a new drive into a PC tower)—not exactly plug-and-play, but the installation promises to be fully functional when it ships. Other than that, this is a solid mixer for beginning DJs and turntablists alike. *Monty Luke*



THE REMIX TESTAMENT

**Remixer's Bible: Build Better Beats Book**  
**MSRP: \$24.99; www.backbeatbooks.com**

While programming a 16-step drum sequencer may be as easy as loading a dishwasher, the mystery behind pounding out a top track may seem impossible. The **Remixer's Bible** categorizes the many facets of remixing a dance track, and offers shortcuts and strategies that novices and engineers alike will appreciate; topics include how to fatten up bass mixes and compose the perfect loop, how to get full use out of a limited array of gear, and the best ways to pull eminent performances from vocalists. *Praxis*

THE SAMPLE MATRIX IS NOW FULLY CUSTOMIZABLE AND RE-SIZABLE.



FULLY CHARGED

**Native Instruments Battery 3 Drum Sampler**  
**MSRP: \$229; www.native-instruments.com**

The latest incarnation of **Battery**, NI's beloved drum sampler, contains a number of updates geared towards stage-jockeying. First and foremost, v3 sports a loop machine that allows beat syncing with sliced-loop formats like Recycle, Apple Loops, and Acid Waves. A new graphical waveform editor allows samples to be tweaked on the fly, and a master-effects panel keeps the reverb (and delay) pumping through the entire mix. With a total of 128 cells, the sample matrix is now fully customizable and re-sizable, and the spiffy Sample Purge function keeps CPU usage down—crucial for a stable live setup. The effects, while an improvement over v2, are probably best suited for live use—studio hounds might want to stick with dedicated processing units. Besides the impressive new 12GB sample library, other added touches include time-stretching capabilities and a handy series of video tutorials. *Roger Thomasson*

BRAVE NEW WAVES

**Slim Devices Squeezebox 3 Digital Music Receiver**  
**MSRP: \$249-\$299; www.slimdevices.com**

Slim Devices' handsome **Squeezebox 3** makes every advancement of the MP3-driven industry make sense. The tiny box controls all of your encoded music files (except for certain DRM-trapped formats), after pulling them from your computer via a wireless hub, and blasts them to your stereo with minimal latency (a wired version is also available). The unit's display offers multiple controls and track information for just about everything your computer can spit out. What's more, you can pull any internet-based audio stream and direct it to your hi-fi—within minutes I was listening to BBC One and CBC radio. Tap into Archive.org's incredible cache of live shows, or do the whole system one better and check your email on the device with one of the many open-source hacks out there. *Aaron Ashley*

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## VIS-ED: FERGADELIC

From prog rock to Pushead, the inspirations of London's gnarliest graphic design dude.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST IMAGES: FERGADELIC



Fergus Purcell (a.k.a. Fergadelic) was born in 1970, and the decade hasn't stopped influencing him since. The iconic, hyper-literal designs and logos he's created for Silas, Hysteria Glamour, X-Girl Japan, and his own Tonite label often combine the stoner aesthetics of prog rock and classic metal with a subversive sense of humor that seems straight from the pages of Robert Crumb and *Viz* comics. Purcell's signature style is dictated by thematic elements—skulls, sci-fi, skate iconography, music-related graphics—but it isn't dominated by just one technique; pen-and-ink drawings, hard-edged vector graphics, photo-realist airbrushing, and collage all find their way into his work.

Lanky, with a shock of wavy, shoulder-length heshier hair and covered with tattoos (both classic and homemade), 36-year-old Purcell is the physical embodiment of what every 15-year-old skater wants to grow up to be. He lives in London's Kentish Town, where he can often be seen cruising around on his prized possession, a single-speed, steel-frame Condor bike, or searching for records to add to his extensive collection.

Not content to merely drive clothing nerds wild, Purcell also plays music. He's a member of post-acid-house outfit 5 Mic Cluster (alongside esteemed techno producer Mark Broom), a roving participant in "prog-doom-disco collective" Chrome Hoof, and drummer/vocalist for The Changes, an "international art band" with A Bathing Ape designer SK8thing (a.k.a. Shin) and Australian husband-wife design team Perks and Mini (with whom he released *Gas Book #17* in 2004).

We found Fergadelic indulging in his favorite daily ritual—morning coffee—and he was kind enough to send us an inspiring email reply, typed entirely in caps, and peppered with exclamation points and his favorite expressions ("Wow!" and "Cosmic").

### What were the first graphics you did?

When I was a kid, I drew all the time. I think the first time it became graphics was from reading the *2000 A.D.* comic in about 1980, when I was 10. That made me aware of lettering. They had all those great logos for Judge Dredd and Strontium Dog, which I used to copy. Also, my dad was a civil engineer and worked in a big company; he used to bring home the out-of-date Letraset from the technical drawing department for me to play with.

### What do you find yourself doodling lately?

New letter forms (always trying to find some new style). An alien alphabet. Logos for imaginary metal bands. Micro-circuits and fractured crystal landscapes (things aren't the same since doing mushrooms in a flotation tank. Wow!)

### What are your favorite band t-shirts of all time?

The best metal t-shirt ever is Metallica's "Metal Up Your Ass" graphic. (I'm a big fan of Cliff Burton-era Metallica). It shows a toilet in front of a grid (a brick wall?), an arm is thrust from out of the toilet holding a sword, Excalibur-style. The logo above is chromed. It kind of sums up the gonzoid metal aesthetic: It's gnarly (hard to look at without going "ouch!") but funny and

ABOVE: *Stick Stick Dotz* design for Heroin Skateboards

RIGHT: Fergadelic's left arm (front and back), covered with his own homemade tattoos.

Photos used with permission from *Home Made Tattoos Rule* (Serps Press; paperback, \$29.50) by Thomas Jeppe, ©2006 Serps Press. [www.serpspress.com](http://www.serpspress.com)





**THIS PAGE:**

*Kill Your TV*  
 Tonite t-shirt designs  
 (clockwise from top left):  
*Let's Rock*, logo tee, *Love  
 Hunter*, logo tee, *Hardcore*,  
*Pony*

**OPPOSITE PAGE:**

*Forever Rats* poster  
*No Where Now Here*  
*Playbill*

stupid, too. Also, the Cheap Trick European Tour shirt 2001. On the back it has the tour dates—they're all in Germany! I've seen them live a few times and they're still amazing.

**What is your favorite t-shirt design you've ever done?**

It's called "Last of the Great Romantics" and it has a skull. Even more than my other tees, this one was designed for me to wear. It's aged nicely, too; faded black (my favorite color) and flaking print.

**How do your designs for Silas and Tonite differ from each other?**

Tonite is all my personal obsessions; it really is my art form. Working for Silas is doing work to a brief and it's as close as I get to doing a graphics job. The two things are totally different in the way I approach them.

**What have you got planned for the next season of Tonite?**

More skulls! The inspirations are the same as ever. My mind was exploded wide open when I was a teenager by Prince, Van Halen, and then Metallica. At the same time, I was reading *Heavy Metal* magazine and seeing that second wave of underground comix. Then I discovered skating and that imagery really changed me again and has stayed with me. I guess it had a lot in common with fantasy comic art-work but it was projected into a hip, youth culture context. I was really into Zorlac—the first t-shirt I made was a hand-painted copy

of Pushead's Zorlac shrunken skull logo—plus Skull Skates, Santa Cruz, and Vision Street Wear. I tend to draw from the same pool of influences and hope each time to hone what I do into something better. I'm not one of those designers who change their theme and style each season... but next season will be better! Harder, better, faster, stronger!

**What do you do when you're lacking inspiration?**

This never happens! I am always stoking the fires of my own creativity, constantly consuming images. I love old books and am always buying more. As well as picture books, I read novels all the time, mostly sci-fi but the occasional biography, too—Fred Vermorel's *Vivienne Westwood: Fashion, Perversity, and the Sixties Laid Bare* and Andy Warhol's *From A To B & Back Again* are a couple of favorites. I read comics and love *Elfquest*, *Akira*, anything by Moebius and Richard Corben, Rod Kierkegaard Jr.'s *Rock Opera*, Jack Kirby's *Thor*. I go to art galleries and museums (the Victoria & Albert [in London] is my favorite), and walk along the canal and through parks listening to my iPod (good thinking time). Getting stoned is good. I watch movies a lot. Just watched *Amadeus* again—it rules! I should give special mention to my friends Misha and Shauna who do the label P.A.M. They are amazing and inspirational in all ways and also give me specific recommendations, like the film *Holy Mountain*, which is still blowing my mind.

**Why do you call yourself the "graphic equalizer"?**

Do you remember the '80s TV show *The Equalizer*? It had the most insane and best ever theme tune by Stewart Copeland. The Equalizer was a freelance vigilante who did his small bit to combat the tide of scumbags and snakers. He was tough, with a cynical, world-weary exterior, but was motivated by an interior moral imperative, only getting involved if he felt the cause was just... See what I'm saying?

**When did you start giving yourself tattoos?**

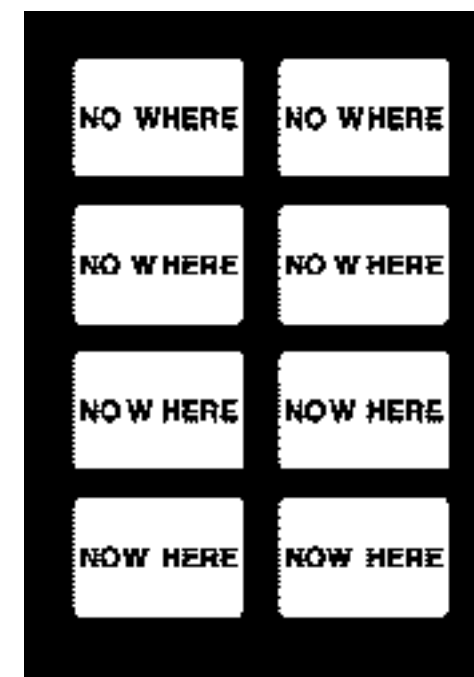
I started homemade tattooing eight years ago. The first thing I did was a little star on my wrist with a sewing pin. I always like the most recent one best—at the moment it's a What-No on my right wrist. (You've probably seen What-No on school desk graffiti—he's the guy with the big nose who peers over the top of a brick wall). I'm right-handed so it was done with my non-writing hand. It came out quite good in spite of that.

**What are you listening to?**

Rush's *Exit Stage Left*, their live album from 1981. It's the killer. It's from their best period, when they bolted on a Police-like power-pop/power-trio dynamic to their prog metal sound. Also Magma, Frank Zappa, Amebix, Satyricon, King Crimson, and other intense prog like Van Der Graaf Generator, early Genesis, Gnldrolog.

**What do you think will be big in 2007?**

Technology! Cheaper and more powerful equipment so people can create on their own terms. I am looking forward to the return of punk-style DIY culture, an explosion of international digital self-expression! Anarchy through technology!







# COMPLICATED FUN

When is a party photo more than just a document of a wild, drunken night? When it's posted on the internet for the world to see.

Words Brandon Ivers  
Illustration Matt Ostrom

Imagine yourself at a warehouse party in downtown L.A. The lead singer of Good Charlotte is here, and Fez from *That 70's Show* is kicking it with three girls from Steve Aoki's "Top 8." A dude with a complicated haircut is doing a drunk slip 'n' slide over spilled beer on the dancefloor. This is a cool party—at least, it looks that way from the pictures.

"A lot of people say my photography makes the party look more fun than it actually [is]," admits 21-year-old Mark Hunter (a.k.a. The Cobrasnake). The owner/operator of web-based hipster institution thecobrasnake.com, Hunter is sort of like paparazzi, except everyone wants him at the party. "Nobody knew who I was when I first started taking [party pictures], so I'd bring a really cute girl with me," concedes Hunter, a former student of Obey mastermind Shepard Fairey, and a self-described "master of marketing." "If I was taking pictures of one cute girl, it made all the other cute girls think it was okay."

Apparently, everyone else decided it was okay, too. It's gotten to the point where you can't walk into an event in NYC or L.A. without camera-toting idiots trying to get your shirt off. A blatant example of this is lastnightsparty.com, the NYC-based photoblog run by Merlin Bronques. Armed with a pink feather boa and calculated effeminateness, Bronques has appointed himself to find every "hot" drunk girl in NYC and convince them to slut it out for the camera. People call him the "black Andy Warhol," but that's like calling Ron Jeremy the next Marlon Brando.

Media theorist Marshall McLuhan once said "art is anything you can get away with," but I'm not entirely sure a picture of two drunk girls pretending to be lesbians is art; nor am I sure people are thinking about what it means to have their stupidest

moments immortalized for the whole world to see. If we're going to turn our lives into an internet reality show, don't we owe it to ourselves to be a little more media-savvy?

History has repeatedly shown us that when people become enamored with new technology, their brains temporarily go straight out the window. It wasn't that long ago that venture capitalists were shelling out millions of dollars for dot-com companies to throw lavish parties and install fire-house poles in their offices. That seems silly now, but not much has changed. We may not have millions of dollars but we're squandering something just as valuable: our privacy.

MySpace, photoblogs, YouTube, etc. are all amazing technologies, but we have to get smarter in how we use them. Our image, our interests, and our daily routine might seem unimportant and fleeting, but it's big money to the right people. Marketing agencies used to pay for the stuff we're willingly handing over for free via our MySpace profiles.

"So what? It's just the internet," seems to be the prevailing mentality, but just because all this internet stuff *seems* so ephemeral doesn't mean it actually is. You think that picture of you rolling around a bathtub with some girl you hardly know is going to just disappear? Think again. I can still find pictures of myself at raves wearing a Care Bear suit from eight years ago. Mark my words: big shit will go down if I ever get denied a job because of that.

Meanwhile, I'm just waiting for the day I overhear a conversation that goes: "You ever hear of that thing called porno? It's crazy. People used to actually *get paid* to have sex in front of the camera."

[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com), [www.thecobrasnake.com](http://www.thecobrasnake.com), [www.lastnightsparty.com](http://www.lastnightsparty.com)

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